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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

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Government Sometimes Stalls

Before every administration is over, there comes a deadlock between Congress and the President. A government so deadlocked cannot act positively in important matters. This may be all right if there is no more serious business on hand than jockeying for the next election. But as the way to manage a country of 130,000,000 people in a dangerous and critical period in history, it has its disadvantages. Responsibility is divided. The enemies of the President in Congress can defeat his proposals without advancing any of their own or taking over the task they prevent him from doing. The separation of the powers often favors the leadership of inferior men in Congress, a lack of party discipline and the rejection of proposals without serious debate. If it so happens that Congress is strong and progressive, while the President is weak and reactionary, the legislative branch cannot depend upon him properly to execute the laws it makes.

Every time this split between President and Congress occurs, informed people wonder whether it would not be better to have a parliamentary system like Britain's, in which the leader of the majority in the legislature is himself the executive, and in which, when the executive is defeated on an important matter, the leader of the opposition has to take over his job. This system has its failings too, but some way might be devised to approach a little closer to its virtues than we now do. Our own system sometimes seems like a device for allowing government to go by default, so that strong private interests can step in and do their own governing.

That Sleepy War of Nerves

Although the long-dreaded August is here at last, the war of nerves has prolonged the crisis so that nobody feels critical any more. Our senses are dulled; Hitler or Mussolini would have to do something startling indeed to make us take our fears seriously. All nations are mobilized and maneuvering, but the news is received as a matter of course. Troubles occur in Danzig; Smigly-Rydz makes a strong speech at Cracow; yet nobody really believes that world war is soon going to burst from that percussion cap. Hungarians and Rumanians fight on the border; the only result is a commission of inquiry. British and French staff officers go to Moscow to consult their Soviet counterparts; nobody knows whether it is bluff or not. Japan bombs British vessels on the Yangtze and asserts that our hostility will make her join the Axis military alliance; everybody yawns and is surprised that she was not already a member. Hostilities continue at the edge of Outer Mongolia, but Japan does not attack Siberia. The Italians test out their lightning-war theories in the valley of the Po; the maneuvers end a day early and it is reported that they were a failure. But everybody knew the Italian army would crumble before the French anyway. Is it just the muggy midsummer haze? Will war take us by surprise just when

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we had stopped worrying about it? Or is the Nazi-Fascist blackmail game played out?

Nazis in France

The French government has enacted new laws carrying the heaviest penalties for treason and espionage —one indication that rumors of a huge Nazi spy ring in France should be taken seriously. Three journalists have been arrested on charges of treasonable activity. What some took to be an effort to suppress newspaper comment on the question, the trial of Lucien Sampaix, editor of L'Humanité, the Paris Communist daily, has ended with a minor victory for the freedom of the press. M. Sampaix was charged with revealing too much concerning the espionage investigations, but the court acquitted him on a technicality, recognizing that many other papers too had published the story.

The Week, the British "inside-the-news" letter, furnishes unverified but startling details. It states that there are so many Nazis agents, and that some of them are in such high places, that the question is one of life and death for France. The general staff considers that the Socialist Republican Union is no longer a French political party, but—with certain exceptions—a bought agent of the German government. The clean-up, if carried through, will be bigger than the Soviet purge of Nazi agents, and will involve several Cabinet ministers. The arrests so far have been made by the military authorities, on the initiative of the General Staff, which is pressing Premier Daladier hard to carry out the job. He is wavering between the army and the majority of the Cabinet, who have the powerful support of the French—and especially the British—"appeasers."

We Strike Hands with Franco

The United States has done a bad day's work by agreeing to supply Franco with raw cotton worth nearly $14,000,000. A group of New York banks will put up the money, the Export-Import Bank, a government institution, will guarantee 80 percent of the total, and the cotton growers will get cash. Although this is called a loan, it might as well be described as a gift, since part of the price is covered by a subsidy and the rest of it may never be paid. The State Department emphasized that we will get no Spanish products, such as olives, cork or wine, in exchange, but we don't know why it should be so pleased by a transaction in which Franco gets cotton and we get some dubious paper.

The Spanish regime is in serious trouble at home; on balance it is probably bankrupt and it is heading toward the same policies that have ruined the foreign trade of Germany and Italy. In spite of this, the United States yielded everything and Franco nothing. He made no promises regarding the $6,500,000 for which the United States is already suing, or in regard to the American-owned telephone system which he apparently intends to keep. Our raw cotton will feed the Catalonian mills and will compete with American textiles on the world market. Washington gossip attributes Franco's stunning victory to the little pro-Fascist and Catholic group in the American State Department. If such gossip is correct, they have an influence over our foreign policy which cannot be explained on any rational grounds.

A Better Social Security Law

Congress made some important changes in the Social Security law just before it adjourned. The payroll tax will remain at only one percent for the next three years, a substantial relief to business both directly and because an amount of nearly $1,000,000,000 will be available for the channels of trade instead of being withdrawn into the reserve fund. The unemployment-insurance tax on salaries of more than $3,000 henceforth need be paid only on $3,000, bringing the tax into line with the payments. Old-age pensions will be substantially larger because of changes now made; the federal government will contribute on an equal basis with the states up to $20 a month. This makes possible annuities of $40 a month and more for persons aged sixty-five. Some of these changes were actuated by fear of the Townsend plan and similar schemes. They are, however, generally in the right direction.

Gunning for the Labor Board

The committee authorized by the House for the express purpose of smearing the National Labor Relations Board is getting off to a fair start. Its chairman, Representative Smith of Virginia, is an unblemished labor-hater. Under long custom, his appointment was predetermined because he was the author of the resolution. Two others of the committee appointed by Speaker Bankhead are conservatives, and only two are friendly to labor. The investigation is completely unnecessary for anyone who wants the candid facts of the controversy, for they have been spread exhaustively on the records, by examination of every competent witness, in hearings before the regular Senate and House committees. But Mr. Smith is not after the facts. He merely wants to keep up a drum-fire of antagonism against the Board until Congress meets again. He will start early in the fall.

The CIO Wins a Strike

By far the most important thing the CIO-UAW won in the settlement of the long strike at General Motors was an enormous increase in prestige. There were specific gains as well: GM agreed to the union's demands for overtime rates, wage reclassifications among the skilled employees, income guarantees, seniority rights and apprenticeship arrangements. But, as we pointed out last week, the implicit question of recognition for the CIO-UAW was more important than

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any of the detailed points around which the bargaining centered.

Now the CIO-UAW is more firmly established as the proper bargaining agent for the 250,000 employees of General Motors than ever before. In addition its organizing strength has been increased throughout the industry. Despite the body-blow Homer Martin's AFL-UAW has had to absorb, it is still very much in the jurisdictional fight. The AFL-UAW has petitioned the NLRB to hold elections, plant by plant, throughout General Motors, and has consented to the scheduled elections at Packard, Chrysler, Briggs and Motors Products. The AFL, of course, hopes to salvage all it can of its waning power in the automobile industry and plant-by-plant elections are its best chance. But even there, Homer Martin seems to be fighting a losing battle.

Democrat Not Worth Watching

The ballyhoo for Governor Lloyd C. (Molly) Stark of Missouri has painted him as the champion who routed Boss Pendergast of Kansas City. The portrait presents something less than the whole picture. In the first place, it gives far too little credit to the federal government, which convicted Pendergast of income-tax evasion. But, more important, it gives no suggestion of the fact that Governor Stark has virtually abandoned his office in favor of a prolonged, triumphal tour of the country. While the Governor was spinning from the San Francisco Fair to Hollywood and other western points of scenic interest, his presence was badly needed in Jefferson City. It might have meant the passage of adequate relief legislation, an important public-bond-sale bill and other pressing matters. In his absence all the measures failed. While 22,000 people in St. Louis were living on state food allowances of $3.31 a month, Governor Stark, on the rim of the Grand Canyon, was declaring that he would not accept the Secretaryship of the Navy, even if it were offered to him—that he had a job to finish as Governor. And so he has. The relief crisis in Missouri has been temporarily met, but without a long-run solution. Only one thing has been accomplished by Stark's junket: he seems to have removed himself from the list of Democrats Worth Watching in 1940.

Six Years of CCC

The Senate Labor Committee wants to make the Civilian Conservation Corps a permanent federal agency and has already approved a bill sponsored by Senator Thomas to accomplish this end. Congressmen who oppose passage of such a bill will have difficulty explaining their position in the face of cold, dry figures that record the epic accomplishments of the CCC during the last six years. In a little publicized report released a few days ago, Director Robert Fechner tells all about the 2,500,000 voluntary enrollees who managed to send home more than $500,000,000 of their meager pay to their families. The CCC has saved these boys from the demoralizing effects of unemployment and the dole. But Fechner stresses the physical work and not the conservation of men, for it is on this basis that the CCC will be judged by the public which governs its fate.

Since 1933, the CCC has planted 1,741,000,000 trees, spent 9,000,000 man-days fighting forest fires, built 104,000 miles of truck trails or minor roads, constructed 71,692 miles of telephone wire and erected 45,000 buildings of various types. Forty thousand bridges have been assembled, 16,000,000 rods of fence strung and 5,000,000 dams built. The young men developed 20,000 springs and small reservoirs, lessened the fire hazard on 2,000,000 acres of land, improved 3,312,498 acres of forest stands, aided farmers all over the country in binding down topsoil and conserved the earth on 13,000,000 acres of farm and grazing land. It would be hard to prove that all this was not worth its cost, even if you ignore the human salvage.

Farm Power Lines Go Coöperative

In 1936 the Rural Electrification Act entrusted to the Rural Electrification Administration a ten-year program of taking power to unelectrified farms. Since that time more farms have been electrified than in the thirty preceding years. The REA's policy is one of "area coverage"—lines are run into isolated areas as well as into towns, so that no pockets are left without power. This idea has appealed so strongly to farmers that by June, 1938, 85.9 percent of the REA's projects were coöperatives. A typical example of the REA's 550 units is a coöperative controlling nearly 200 miles of lines. The lines are paid for by twenty-five-year amortization loans with the lowest interest rates in the world for long-term borrowings. Power is bought wholesale from a private utility, or possibly the TVA, and used by 500 or 600 connected members. These members elect their own trustees, who are the policy-makers for the line. They handle the $200,000 loan, and work in coöperation with the electrical superintendent in charge of all technical matters. Because of its principle that electricity is a necessity and no longer a luxury, the REA is helping to make farming easier and cheaper.

News Notes of a Week

Tension between England and Japan somewhat increased as the British declared that the Japanese destruction of British property at Ichang was deliberately intended. . . . Unrest in the Balkans was intensified. Turkey was reported to have massed 100,000 troops along her European frontier. . . . Instruction in Catholic schools in Austria henceforth must be by lay teachers, a bitter blow at the Church. Another bitter blow came

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in Italy, where Catholic Action has been forced to withdraw entirely from political affairs. . . . The Standard Oil Company of California snatched from under the nose of Italy, Germany and Japan the important oil concession for Saudi Arabia. . . . Trouble seemed to be subsiding between Serbs and Croats in Yugoslavia, and between Danzig and Poland in their customs war over herring and margarine.

WPA officials resumed the dismissal of those who had been continuously employed for eighteen months. . . . Connecticut's state law prohibiting birth control was declared unconstitutional in the Superior Court in Waterbury. . . . The civil war between theatrical labor unions grew fiercer and threatened to result in a nation-wide strike of actors. . . . President Roosevelt, having given interlocking bank directors four years' time in which to uninterlock, refused them another four years to finish the job. . . . Senator Taft of Ohio announced that he was willing to be Republican nominee for President, although if elected he is sure he won't like it. Don't know if we will either.

What Congress Really Did

WHEN CONGRESS ADJOURNED, its record was widely praised—or blamed—as a great revolt against New Dealism; it had, so people thought, curbed spending and put an end to Rooseveltian reforms. Yet a more careful analysis upsets this verdict. What happened in the last few days of the session has obscured the general picture. The behavior of Congress has a meaning, but it is not the one popularly accepted.

The Congress returned in 1938, in an election which strengthened the Republicans and, in the main, defeated Mr. Roosevelt's attempted purge of the Democrats, was supposed to be hell-bent on economy. The net result of its deliberations consists in the largest peacetime spending in our history. It appropriated more than the President called for. At the same time it did not increase taxes, but at several points reduced them. If the New Deal is supposed to stand primarily for an unbalanced budget, for large-scale spending of borrowed funds, then the present Congress is more New Deal than the White House.

Its record in this respect is interesting. Part of the increase is accounted for by national defense. Without a moment's hesitation it gave the army and navy everything the President recommended and more besides. Another part of the increase is attributable to a straight subsidy for the farmers—$385,000,000 for "parity payments," in addition to the regular $400,000,000 for crop control—which the President not only did not ask for, but opposed. At the same time, Congress tried to exercise its economy on WPA. A deficiency appropriation to carry the program from January to the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 1939, was slashed by $150,000,000 below the administration's request. But a few weeks later Congress, not daring to face the consequences of this heartless action, restored $100,000,000 of the cut. Final result: a saving of $50,000,000 to match against hundreds of millions of extra spending in other directions.

In appropriating for the WPA in the present fiscal year, Congress voted exactly what the President asked. The sum is far too small and, unless employment revives more than now seems likely, it will have to be supplemented next winter. The bill is an outrageously bad one in other respects. But, as far as spending is concerned, Mr. Roosevelt got just what he wanted. We come, then, to the action of the final days of the session in first paring down and then ditching entirely the "spending-lending" proposal, and in denying an extra $800,000,000 to the Housing Administration. Neither of these amounts had been budgeted; they were afterthoughts. Neither was intended as deficit spending at all; the investments were to be self-liquidating. The amounts to be used in the next fiscal year were much smaller than the totals to be authorized; they were too small in comparison with the appropriations already voted to make much difference one way or the other in the Treasury figures or in general prosperity. Yet, on the basis of these two actions, ill considered and petulant as they were in large measure, Congress has acquired the reputation of being thrifty.

On the economic side, then, the reactionaries in Congress have made as pretty a political alibi for the President as could be asked for. If recovery exists in 1940, he will inevitably get the credit, and everything will be rosy for the Democrats. If it does not come, he can blame a Congress that has indelibly stamped itself in the public mind as one devoted to economy—but one that really did more to bring recovery by the spending route than Mr. Roosevelt himself requested. If the President had had secret agents and *provocateurs* working for him among his congressional enemies, he could not have done better for himself.

Now let us see what Congress did in the realm of legislation that did not have to do primarily with spending. Mr. Roosevelt's great defeats in the previous Congress, it will be remembered, had to do with the Supreme Court and governmental reorganization. The conservatives boasted loudly about having stopped the New Deal and injured Mr. Roosevelt's prestige. The present session of the Senate confirmed without question the appointment to the Court of two men whose presence will do much to keep its heavy hand off the prerogatives of the legislature—Mr. Justice Frankfurter and Mr. Justice Douglas. They, with Reed and Black, give Roosevelt appointees almost a majority of the Court. Yet we hear nothing of "court-packing." Mr. Roosevelt also had extraordinary luck with his other appointments. Congress passed the Reorganization bill with a few minor alterations, and accepted

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without a flurry the plans promulgated by Mr. Roosevelt under it.

The Social Security Act was greatly improved and extended in accordance with the recommendations of a commission appointed by Mr. Roosevelt, and in line with principles long advocated by progressives.

The TVA, supposed to have been undermined by the utilities' opposition and the resignation of Chairman Morgan, and subject to exhaustive congressional investigation, was granted a bond issue to complete its purchases of private properties, and was not restricted or injured.

After a scare in the Senate, caused by a cynical political deal between Republican sound-money partisans and Democratic silverites, Mr. Roosevelt's power to revalue the dollar and use of the exchange-stabilization fund were renewed.

In spite of heavy and carefully organized attacks from the Right, the Wagner Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act were left unamended.

The greatest personal defeat sustained by the President was on the neutrality legislation. But this is an issue on which he never has had his way with Congress. Moreover, it is one that cuts squarely across internal political lines. The President joins with a miscellaneous assortment including the Communists, Wall Street bankers, President Butler of Columbia, liberal adherents of the League of Nations and followers of Woodrow Wilson, in favor of collective security. His opponents on this issue include not merely the Nazis, William Randolph Hearst and Republican conservatives, but a large number of the most progressive elements in the country and hordes of plain citizens without definite political views. In addition, the issue has been badly confused in argument by both sides. The administration's defeat on this issue can scarcely be regarded as a black eye for the New Deal or a feather in the cap of organized conservatism.

Even the rejection of the spending-lending bill, as described in Washington Notes this week, is far from a clear rebuke to the administration on a matter of principle. Not only might the President have obtained the passage of this kind of proposal if he had gone about it properly and in time, but the bill itself contained sections that could readily be opposed by sincere progressives. There are serious doubts about handing out money to bankrupt railroads before a general railroad reorganization. There is justified opposition to lending more money to foreign nations that cannot repay it. Many objections to toll roads exist. After all the help to farmers that already has been extended, one wonders whether more money to help tenants buy farms is justified—at least without a more careful program than was offered. It would be a serious mistake to suppose that Congress will never listen to the arguments for governmental investment just because it put this measure on ice.

The record of Congress thus appears, from careful study, much better than it does from reading the spot news. Yet one final comment must be made. The reactionaries in Congress are indeed stronger than they have previously been since Mr. Roosevelt was elected; they did succeed in doing substantial damage to the WPA; if everything they tried to do had gone into effect, the United States would not long be far unlike Hitler's Reich. Their devotion to economy is a farce; they invoke it only when the spending is for social benefit or may, they fear, compete with private business or banking, but they will spend unlimited amounts for military and pork-barrel purposes. They recklessly interfere with the most necessary economic measures, like stabilization of foreign exchange, if that action constitutes a slap at the President, and do not scruple in so doing to help raids on the Treasury by those whose principles they abhor, like the silverites. They oppose organized labor at every turn and work zealously for low wages. They continually try to restrict civil liberties by applying the red smear and by legislation against subversive activities, real or imaginary. They are hostile to all foreigners, striving to increase the cruelties and injustices of deportation and turning a stony ear to the tragic cries of refugees from Nazi and Fascist terror.

The Republicans voted solidly; as a rule they voted and spoke without a tinge of that liberalism they were supposed to have imbibed. They have no constructive program whatever. They have just one idea—opposition to the New Deal. And the renegade Democrats who aided them on many occasions are even further to the Right. A Congress really governed by these elements, especially if led by a President sympathetic with them, would be an unmitigated disaster.

Federal Workers in Politics

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT WAS CONFRONTED by a serious dilemma in regard to the Hatch bill. On the whole, its purposes are good, and the restrictions on political activity of federal government employees were taken verbatim from the civil-service statutes. But there are some provisions so dangerous that they caused the American Civil Liberties Union to urge a veto. One section prohibits people on relief or WPA rolls from making voluntary contributions for "any political purpose." This last phrase might mean almost anything. Depending upon its interpretation, the new law might prevent contributions to organizations dealing with race, creed, religion, legislative or administrative activity.

Another section prohibits membership in any organization advocating the overthrow of our constitutional form of government. The word "overthrow" could readily be interpreted as "change" and be applied

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even against advocates of peaceful reforms like the direct election of Senators, the income tax or prohibition. These dangerous provisions should be modified by amendment at the earliest possible moment.

As to the new law in general, everything depends upon how it is enforced. The correct distinction is not hard to draw in principle, though difficult to define in detail. Public employees should not be subject to enforced levies for political purposes, or coerced into supporting particular candidates, in order to protect their jobs.

On the other hand, they have legitimate interests and rights as citizens. They should not be prevented from speaking their minds, or making voluntary contributions, or voting as they please. Reactionaries have argued in favor of depriving all those on relief, and sometimes all in public employment, of even voting rights. They conceive the public service as a mere machine to get more money out of the taxpayers. But in a society where a large and increasing part of the population does work for governmental agencies, such a restriction would be fatal to democracy. Moreover, persons in public service should not be denied political careers, since this is an excellent avenue for poor men of talent, and as a rule rich candidates have an advantage. Too often the power that is taken away from politicians is simply handed over to business corporations.

An anomalous situation is created by the fact that federal employees are presumably withdrawn from the more unsavory types of political activity, while state and municipal workers are not. Bad as the federal machines have been in the past, those in the states and cities have been far worse. Even here, however, there is improvement, though it may seem discouragingly slow. Those who are pessimistic because of the doings of a Pendergast in Kansas City or a Hague in Jersey City can console themselves by reading what Tammany was like fifty years ago.

Already, there is talk of extending the principle of the Hatch law to the states, and the usual division of counsel as to the best way to proceed. One school favors introducing a separate bill in each state legislature and fighting it through. The other suggests as a simpler short cut that the federal government should require proper standards of political conduct among state employees on pain of withholding future grants of funds. Advocates of the second course argue that it might take many years to bring the most badly behaved commonwealths—Louisiana, for example—into line, while federal coercion, exercised through the purse, is instantaneous. Those who favor the first alternative say that there is no use trying to enforce on any community a standard of conduct higher than or substantially different from its own ideas, as was shown in the prohibition amendment. They argue that until the standards in the states have been raised through education, through the creation of an *esprit de corps*, any law must remain a dead letter.

We see no reason why these two schools of thought should be regarded as mutually incompatible. The principle of bringing pressure to bear on the states through federal subsidies is now well established; it is itself an effective educational process. The existence of such a lever does not preclude the creation of a soundly based spirit of public service in the states and cities through local efforts. With such an educational process will go a better understanding of what are and what are not legitimate political activities by public servants.

The Vote Against Housing

ONE OF THE STUPIDEST THINGS done by Congress just before it adjourned was to kill the proposal to add $800,000,000 to the funds for the United States Housing Authority. This money would have been loaned, not given outright. It would have been invested in well built houses, which are one of the best investments in the world; the security would have been safer than in the case of the old PWA loans, which were collected nearly 100 percent. The money would have aided the building industry, which is deeply depressed and which many people believe holds the key to general recovery.

Presumably the House of Representatives was much impressed by the remarks of Bruce Barton of New York and Albert Gore of Tennessee. Both these gentlemen were guilty of cruel misstatements of fact. The USHA asked for $800,000,000 to be loaned and also $45,000,000 to cover the cost for a year of aiding the poorest families to pay their rent, families which otherwise would not be able to meet even the very modest minimums set. This principle was adopted in the first law for the USHA, which appropriated about the same amount of money. It is the principle behind nearly every important public-housing program in the world today. The sum, moreover, is not so large as it looks; deducting the USHA's earnings on the program, the $45,000,000 is reduced to $30,000,000. Under the program previously authorized, an additional $20,000,000 is involved, or $50,000,000 in all.

Opponents of the plan in the House promptly assumed that this rent subsidy would have to be continued for sixty years. Multiplying $50,000,000 by sixty, they announced that the plan was not self-liquidating, that on the contrary the government would lose $3,000,000,000 or thereabouts. They showed a curious inability to grasp the difference between the present value of a sum of money and its value on the installment plan over sixty years. Bruce Barton was even more fantastic. He virtually added in the rent subsidy and called it part of the cost of constructing the build-

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ing. His entire argument was nonsense, but it was doubtless impressive to some members of Congress, most of whom are utterly ignorant of matters of finance.

Every sensible person knows that no Congress can bind its successors in regard to expenditures. The chances are a thousand to one against a continued rent subsidy for sixty years. All that this Congress was asked to do was to authorize a net addition of $30,000,000 for one year. This would have made it possible to house something like 1,200,000 persons who are now living in unfit homes. Such an expenditure does not seem unreasonable in comparison with an annual cost of $2,000,000,000 for national defense, three-quarters of a billion for the agricultural-adjustment program, half a billion for the veterans, a third of a billion for the CCC, $100,000,000 for the National Youth Administration. Those who refused to support the appropriation were either disgracefully ignorant or shockingly mean-spirited. In either case, they have done the country a grave disservice.

Queer Doctrine

IN CHICAGO there is a Catholic Church called St. Sylvester's, which publishes a magazine, Our Parish Voice. This periodical appears to be largely a nationally syndicated organ. Except for three or four pages of local advertising and church announcements, it consists of highly skillful articles written by professionals and obviously intended for a national audience. At one point in the magazine, the reader is requested to address inquiries not to St. Sylvester's Church but to The Catholic Family Monthly, Huntington, Indiana. Huntington is a well known center of Catholic publishing, being the home of Our Sunday Visitor, with a circulation of more than 450,000.

A recent issue of Our Parish Voice contained an extraordinary article by the Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.SS.R., D.D. Says Father Connell, attacking the laws now existing in some states, forbidding marriage to those suffering from venereal diseases:

> Disease, even of the most revolting character, is not so great an evil as mortal sin; nor is it so grave a misfortune that many children should be born defective as that God should be offended by a single sin of impurity. It is true, a person afflicted with a social disease is urgently recommended to defer marriage until he is cured, even though the partner is willing to enter into wedlock with full knowledge of the dangers it entails. But this is something quite different from declaring that such a marriage is *forbidden* by the law of God, and the Church, the authorized interpreter of God's law in all that pertains to marriage, has never made such a declaration.
>
> From the same principles we can conclude that married persons are generally allowed the use of their conjugal rights when one of them is afflicted with a venereal disease, provided the other is aware of this circumstance and there is a good reason to justify their having intercourse. Such a reason would be particularly the grave danger that one of the couple may commit sin unless furnished with the legitimate satisfaction that marriage provides. The healthy partner is not indeed obliged to accede to the desires of the other; but he or she will often perform a praiseworthy action by doing so if the sin of incontinence is thereby avoided.
>
> From this brief presentation of the Catholic attitude toward the social diseases as a bar to marriage it is evident that there is a wide difference betwen the Church's way of looking at this question and the way in which the modern world regards it.

Are Father Connell's views to be regarded as Catholic doctrine? The New Republic's efforts to find out have met a mixed response. We have learned that in the April issue of The Ecclesiastical Review, published for the Catholic University of America, the Rev. Thomas V. Moore, O.S.B., Ph.D., sharply disputed Father Connell's arguments. On the other hand, Msgr. John A. Ryan of the National Catholic Welfare Conference says Father Connell speaks the mind of the Church. He writes that the statement is "authoritative doctrine and discipline. If I were attempting to cover the same points, I might use somewhat different emphasis, but the positive statements that he makes are correct as they stand." The New Republic inquired of Archbishop Spellman of New York as to whether Father Connell is authorized to speak as he does, but we have thus far had no reply. We refuse to believe unless we are forced to that the Church condones advice to break the existing laws of a number of states, or to follow a policy so repugnant to every decent instinct of Catholic and non-Catholic alike as that advocated by Father Connell.

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Small Town Rackets

TODAY there are more rackets per square foot of property and per capita of suffering citizenry in America's small towns than there are in New York or Chicago, those much publicized battlegrounds of G-man and racket-boss. The main difference is that in the small cities the rackets are far more crudely run and far less often smashed.

Their camouflage is as essential a part of the American scene as are their ingenious depredations. For, paradoxically enough, the publicity machinery which has made the American public so racket-conscious in the last five years has only increased the protective coloration of the small-town big-time racketeer. Those heroes of modern American mythology—Tom Dewey and J. Edgar Hoover, Dick Tracy and Don Winslow, The Green Hornet and the "Gang-Busters"—have all teamed up to convince the average citizen that racketeering is the greatest threat to American society, and to combat it the greatest adventure in American life.

But the requirements of radio drama (let alone those of the comic strip, movie and even breakfast-food box) are too narrow to allow a wide range of subject. The extreme narrowness of these new folkways of popular education has led public attention straight past the crudest and richest rackets of all—the small-town "All-American" rackets.

These rackets make the whole tribe of Lucky Luciano, Johnny Torrio and Dutch Schultz look like adolescents—enjoying, at best, short and boyish sprees. The small-town big-timer operates not only once, nor even for a brief span of "protected" years, but can ordinarily reckon on the take growing steadily with each fiscal year and lasting all his business life. The country's All-American racketeers have every justification for looking down on their brothers of the big cities as fly-by-nights ignorant of sound business principles.

Here are three of the All-American rackets, firmly entrenched in communities of less than 100,000 population throughout the country. The average reader will probably never have heard of any of them before. But the small-town reader will have no difficulty in identifying two of them—as an average—operating in his peaceful, sleepy little community.

Let us take the notorious case of Riverport. This manufacturing center of 50,000 inhabitants contained an enterprising young man named Bill Gallagher. Bill had blue eyes, a brisk manner and a somewhat plodding imagination. The ups and downs of unemployment in Riverport were the most vital factor in all social and business life of his town. Trying to pay a bill, or to get a bill paid, was the main problem in most citizens' lives.

Bill, therefore, founded a Credit and Collection Bureau, and plunged into his work with vigor. His job was to see that rascals who had money should pay it fairly and promptly to the poor people they had been standing up on legitimate bills. And it was to see too that those who did pay properly should have a good name in the community, and that those who did not should have a very bad one.

His collection department and his credit-information department thus worked hand in hand. When he went to collect a bill, and his victim did not pay, Gallagher always gave him the same ultimatum: "If you don't kick in, I'll smear your credit all over town so badly that you won't be able to buy a stick of candy for the next six months without paying cash down." And he did it—vigorously. Gallagher blacklisted the nonpayer on his own Credit Lists, and he pilloried him in every other institution to which he had any access in the town.

Even his most enterprising competitors, who broke windows of stubborn debtors, or hired small boys to harass them at home and in public, did not do so well as Gallagher. Business began to roll into his offices—particularly the hard cases (a year or more old) on which the professional charge was 50 percent of whatever he could collect.

At the end of the first year, Bill felt like a cross between a limp rag and Simon Legree, but he had netted an income of $6,300 above his very meager expenses. By the end of another year, he found he had doubled his profit, and had begun seriously to threaten the hitherto best collection bureau in Riverport.

Gallagher spent the next twelve months building up not his collection trade, but the number of places in which his Credit Reports (with their vital smears) would be seen. Bill's subsequent reports gave more merchants more warnings than any other service in the city; and a tidal wave of subscriptions almost submerged his office. Simultaneously, his collection requests from the same merchants swelled; one business fed the other.

When Bill put the squeeze on a bad debtor now, the debtor was licked. In two more years, Bill Gallagher was credit-collections boss of Riverport—with profits never running below $25,000 a year. Of course the operation of the two interlocking departments was technically a misdemeanor in the state penal code, and there was a chance—just the faintest chance—that a bitter enemy (if rich and persevering) might eventually get him convicted of the felony of conspiracy. But the enemies he was making were uniformly poor, and the merchants whom he was so efficiently serving loved him like a brother.

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Gallagher had constructed for himself what is probably the pettiest of all the small-town rackets. At his proudest, he could liken himself only to a first-rate "fence" in New York or Chicago; he still ran a legitimate business on the side.

Then a greater small-town-rackets brain teamed up with Bill—and pointed out a dark alley in which his organization's rough rubdown and efficient shakedown of debtors could operate far better. It was a smart young Italian lawyer, Joseph Martinelli, who pointed out the new victims.

"Look, Bill," he said, "you are now a great public service in Riverport. . . . But do you realize your set-up can make you automatically trustee in every bankruptcy case that is filed in this town? . . . That's worth a king's ransom in itself!"

It was then March of 1937 and an "imminent bankruptcy" was no problem to locate in the immense Gallagher office files. This tottering enterprise was Riverport's Modern Mode Clothing Store. Gallagher and Martinelli got out special reports to all the likely creditors of Modern Mode—as normal work of the credit department. These merchants responded with a deluge of bills they still had outstanding against the threatened store. Just as soon as the new racket-team felt sure they had received more than half of all claims which could exist against Modern Mode, and had them solidly on file with their collection department, they swung them—like a lead-pipe.

Modern Mode promptly folded. By simple action of the bankruptcy law, Gallagher and Martinelli became bankruptcy trustee—for they held the majority of the claims. The trustee's fee came to roughly 10 percent of all the funds they handled in the case. In this first grab alone, it amounted to $1,700.

Rivertown, like all heavy-industrial cities, had suffered a bruising load of bankruptcies ever since 1932. The new "Compulsory Trustee in Bankruptcy" racket was a gold mine. It was as good as robbing a bank—and with policemen serving as your escort and bodyguard. In the first year of operation, the firm's new "branch" brought in $26,312. In 1938, the worst business year since 1933, the distress of Riverport made the firm rejoice to the still sweeter tune of $41,783. They did better than many leading local factories.

It was Alonzo Townsend who now raised the Gallagher-Martinelli combination to the solid worth of a crooked racetrack. He suggested the addition of a "Personal Loan Corporation," and with his superior skill at complex shakedown took over the works.

Alonzo Townsend was a member of an old New England family. At forty-five, he was an impressive figure—with his six-foot frame, long lantern jaw, coal-black hair with its single distinguished streak of silver, and long floppy hands whose finger tips loved to tap one another gently as he talked, giving a vague impression that he was forever praying for the soul of his interlocutor.

His basic business was the "Three-Way Racket"—which must have charmed him because of the constant and adroit changes of method which it required.

Alonzo would go down to the Gallagher and Martinelli office in the morning and prepare himself a "best prospect" list from all the new credit data received since the previous day. Accordingly he called, for instance, one morning on Mr. Heinz Valerien of 196 Water Street, Riverport. On his inquiry, Mr. Valerien admitted that a judgment had been filed against him the day before, for the sum of $300. Mr. Valerien was a crack machinist, of steady habits, at the chemical works. But he had been laid off—in a "seasonal shutdown"—in the same month which saw his wife nearly die when her baby arrived prematurely at the local hospital. He had other debts now too, and the hospital had finally filed court action to collect.

Alonzo, with his best professional manner of sympathetic courtesy, asked why Mr. Valerien had not borrowed from the banks—"to tide him over till the chemical plant reopened and rehired him"—and thus saved the ruin of his general credit and the disastrous fees, taxes, penalties and exorbitant interest which always mount up in the case of court judgments. Alonzo listened raptly while Valerien explained once more to him what hundreds of his "customers" had already recounted in exactly the same terms: no bank would lend him the money because he had no satisfactory collateral. Then Mr. Townsend sprang nobly to the rescue: he agreed himself to accept the debtor's car, his clothes, his furniture—anything (and if he had his way, not much short of everything movable) as collateral on this "unusual" loan. "But my firm must of course exact the maximum legal rate of interest for such insecure issues," Alonzo closed earnestly—"which is three percent a month."

Alonzo Townsend obtained Mr. Valerien's signature to an application for the loan. It was to be made by the Townsend (also Gallagher and Martinelli) Permanent Loan—duly and legally incorporated under the laws of the state. Within the hour he was tapping at the door of the treasurer of the Riverport Hospital. "I am in a position to know," he ultimately informed the treasurer (and with entire accuracy), "that my firm can collect that bad Valerien debt for you—at our usual fee of 20 percent."

Alonzo always got his man—sooner or later. If the hospital, for instance, did not give him the collection job, Alonzo would not make the loan to Valerien. Next time the treasurer would be smarter.

Indeed, the system was so good that Gallagher was soon doing all the collecting (just as Martinelli had long handled all items in the "bankruptcy branch"). This worked out better, since their three-way felony of conspiracy was not so openly flaunted in their victims'

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faces. The 36 percent a year, with plenty of seizable belongings as security, plus an instant return of 20 percent down, was the best money-maker yet, by far. The more actively the firm's other departments (Credit and Collections) operated, the greater and richer grist they poured into the human meat-grinder of the Three-Way Racketeer. In less than six months, hard-working Alonzo had genteelly muscled his way into a virtual monopoly on the "emergency loan" business of Riverport.

The social results of this iron-handed control of small-town credit were sometimes surprisingly melodramatic. In the case of Bill Hallahan, for instance, it prevented a son's getting his dead father buried until the firmly entrenched "three-way" artist had ground out his 3 and 20 percent. This is merely the most striking of a score of similar holdups.

Bill Hallahan, a Riverport young man of good prospects though he was only earning a small salary, was still living ahead of his income when his father—the family's main income producer—suddenly dropped dead. His father's affairs, so abruptly terminated, were intricately involved, and there was no cash on hand for the funeral. Young Bill finally went to the Townsend Permanent Loan house to borrow $300—which his family undertaker advised him would provide a proper funeral. Sympathetically, Alonzo "investigated," and okayed Bill's request—but "only as a future loan, when a full bill by the mortician had been submitted."

This mystified Bill. It angered the old family undertaker, who utterly refused "such dirty business." In desperation young Hallahan was forced to shop around among the other Riverport undertakers within the limits of this curious proviso. The second one he approached jumped at it. The bill for Father Hallahan's funeral was then "financed" by the loan company, and Bill paid it off over a year, plus three percent a month, having put up both his own and his mother's car for collateral.

Of course the new mortician had to charge Bill $375 in order to satisfy the three-way racketeer's usual "collection fee." (If this merchant had been still smarter, he would have charged the family undertaker's original estimate, $300—and given the Hallahans only what would ordinarily be $240 worth of services.)

Alonzo had not thought of this angle before. His position enabled him to exact a personal tax of 20 percent on all emergency-credit retailing in the city. Better than that, he could see that the merchant who "played ball" with him would get all such business.

In the first part-year of operations, 1936, the new take grossed $38,904. The next year it climbed sturdily, through Alonzo's industry—and also through the extremity of thousands of Riverport citizens struggling to clear themselves of depression debts—to $46,852. Although the town only coasted into a bigger slump in 1938, Alonzo had actually wrung out another $50,000, before the Attorney General caught up with him.

In a way, it is too bad that any of this small-town trio ever saw the penitentiary. For that is the one fact in the Riverport case which stamps it as fundamentally different from thousands like it operating all over America. This group of small-town big-timers came to grief not through the alertness of their fellow citizens and victims, but because they finally quarreled over their immense profits.

All-American racketeers entrench themselves in small towns so firmly that only a major convulsion, or their own suicide by confession, can dislodge them. For these small-town big-timers can pay plenty for protection. Their monopoly position lets them pay like kings distributing largesse, not with the petty $100-bill bribes of small-time metropolitan mobsters. Alonzo and company—and their thousands of counterparts throughout the nation—can pay in far more valuable favors: in services of collection, vital credit news and loans.

The figures on the Riverport rackets are interesting: In the brief eight years since the conception of Gallagher's petty squeeze, the combination had recorded a take of $367,642. But the bankruptcy refinement had been operating only the last of those years, the "three-way" plan only three. The last racket had brought in a bonanza of almost $208,000.

Such amateur public enemies as Pendergast, Dillinger and the kidnaper of the Lindbergh baby may well envy these racketeers their success. The richest and most prosecution-proof rackets in America today are apparently in the small towns, not the big cities.

CHARLES E. HEWITT JR.

Valse Triste

Rich, dark, somber, slow sad music,
Mournful and useless, calls
The sick at heart, the far from home, to hearken
Around the inlaid walls,
(Bright wood, and plush, and palm)—attending music
That swells and dwells and falls.

Sunday at sundown, on a steamer cruising
An aged sea whose weight
Has borne all things but tide, whose acres darken,
(The hour is late)—
Whose shores are sunk in even deeper darkness,
Decrepitude and hate.

O to no purpose drowned
Under the seas of sound and sound of seas,
(Sorrowful passengers!) for consolation
Vain, vain as girls who pose upon a frieze
That no one, yet, has found.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES

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Europe: Three Capitals

Paris

A LITTLE WHILE AGO France was a nation divided against itself. There were riots, fighting in the streets, government scandals and a succession of government downfalls. The franc almost collapsed and capital fled the country. Hard-headed observers were predicting civil war. But now, only a little more than a year after the jittery panic of Munich, I find France confident, unified—and profoundly reassuring. What has brought about the change?

The main thing is that all of France, quietly and without the usual propaganda build-up, has decided to go to war if necessary. From the extreme Right to the extreme Left there is agreement that fascist aggression must be halted here and now. The only dissident groups are the big industrialists, who believe in peace at any price, and the old-time pacifist Socialists.

Whomever you talk to, a woman in a suburban train going home with her market basket, a man in the labor movement, a business man, or one of the dozens of chance acquaintances you make in friendly, talkative Paris—always the subject turns to war. Will it come? When? Can it be prevented? If war can be prevented at all, they feel, it will be by the policy of "Peace through Strength." I have not met anyone who does not think that President Roosevelt's action was a strong force for peace. Many believe that, had he not taken it, there would already have been war. Everyone talks about the negotiations for a British-French-Russian pact. And it has almost unanimous support from the complex of political parties.

After Czecho-Slovakia the great shift in France's leadership took place. M. Bonnet, the appeaser par excellence, lost the public's favor. M. Daladier, who, it is generally believed here, consented unwillingly to the sacrifices demanded at Munich, assumed command. France has given her confidence to him and lives more comfortably under his mild dictatorship than she has for a long time. It is a military dictatorship, even though the press retains the same degree of freedom and critical political meetings still are allowed.

France wears her dictatorship lightly at this time, but it may become despotic at any moment. A Communist meeting in the south has been broken up forcibly, and Communists and Socialists are both opposed to Daladier's domestic policies on the just grounds that the workers are carrying all the brunt of the new economic decrees. But on the whole the dictatorship has been accepted with surprisingly little grumbling.

One measure of Daladier's popularity is his growing majority in votes of confidence. On December 22 it was only 7, but by May 12 it had risen to 145. And there are concrete achievements which may account for the increase. Production rose 11.2 percent between November and April. Production per worker is increasing in France while it decreases in Germany. The building trades have turned up sharply, and there is a general restoration of confidence based on the flow of gold back into the country. There is an abundance of idle capital looking for reinvestment; both the government loan and short-term foreign bonds have been oversubscribed. If the constant threat of war could be removed, France would look confidently forward to prosperous days.

Berlin

THE CONDOR LEGION is back from Spain. The men wear flowers in their belts and smile at the blond girls in their dirndls who have come to watch the giant parade. These 20,000 soldiers passing the reviewing stand are the first victorious German troops to march through the Brandenbargen since 1871.

No one had any idea how many German "volunteers" had been in Spain. The government did not officially admit its intervention until May 31.

I have just come from France where 6,000 veterans of the International Brigade were in awful concentration camps. This magnificence is a terrible contrast. Now they are paying tribute to the fallen. On either side of the speakers' stand are thousands of the Hitler Youth, each with a shield decorated with gilded laurel. Each shield bears the name of a dead German soldier. Who inscribes the names of the fallen in the International Brigade?

You see the strain most in Berlin. Berlin has become a boom town where everything rushes along at a furious pace. Here is a great new building that went up like magic. Five thousand men worked on it day and night. Great areas in the heart of the city are being torn down and rebuilt. But the rapid change is not just physical; Berlin has also changed its soul. Some essential quality has been subtly altered. It is no longer a cosmopolitan city; it is consciously, stridently German. Nazi officials in uniform stalk through the hotels. Parties of *Kraft durch Freude* people stream down Unter den Linden. Processions of horse-drawn buses jolt goggling loads of sightseers through town. In the hotels menus are printed strictly in German. Everything proclaims—that here is a German world.

Here also is the center of all the disturbance, the source of the war of nerves that has been causing inter-

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national jitters. At first you don't know what is meant by "the tension." You hear of people leaving Germany to recover from the *spannung* and you wonder why. The rising dislike of "encircling" foreigners does not show itself to the visitor. Yet a progressive feeling of discomfort crawls up his back, the product of dozens of small things. There are signs in the subways warning people against foreigners. They say in substance "Don't talk with soft-spoken foreigners who may turn anything you say against you."

There are signs in a park saying "Jewish Bench." It is upsetting to have people put the telephone out of the room or plug it up when they have nothing more important to tell you than that they are getting bootlegged eggs from a woman who furnishes eggs to a Nazi official; or to have a shopkeeper look around fearfully before saying, "I always found my Jewish customers good people. If anyone hears that I'll be in a concentration camp."

Underneath the surface is a constant grumbling, often from the Nazis themselves. There is not one group "for" and one group "against" the regime. Members of the same class and traditions are violently pro or con. Everyone is uneasy, everyone is afraid, everyone is uncomfortable. Yet I have still to hear any competent observer who attaches political significance to this unrest. It is partly to be accounted for by the fact that the people always grumble, the pace is too hard, the restrictions too many. The war of nerves is telling on the Germans more than on those against whom it is directed.

Yet discontent and opposition to the regime are less today than last fall. When the troops marched through Berlin in September they met a sullen, apprehensive populace. The seizure of Czecho-Slovakia and Memel has revived the popularity of Adolf Hitler. "What a man! He adds territory without shedding a drop of blood. More prestige, more territory and it hasn't cost us a cent."

The reply to Roosevelt tickled everyone. You can hardly talk to a German without that coming up. Do the Americans, they wonder, appreciate its wit, its satire?

It will be difficult to sell war to the German people. War is dreaded here as it is not dreaded in France, as it is not feared in Poland. Maybe because there is a subconscious realization that there is no need for war and that there will be war only if Germany wills it.

Our pro-Hitler American friends are almost more vociferous than the Germans in praising the Nazi accomplishments: six million people put back to work, the national income increased, Germany rearmed, two million people added to the German Reich together with Austria; Bohemia, Moravia, Memel, Rumania, Yugoslavia and the Baltic States all hall-marked with the swastika; Spain within the German orbit; the treaty with Italy; the labor camps and *Kraft durch Freude*. There has been a resurgence here such as no country has ever witnessed. Yet this does not alter the fact that the general atmosphere is something like that in a steel town when espionage is rife. Everyone spies on everyone. Mail is opened. Servants and porters keep lists of visitors.

So all of Germany lives in a cloud of suspicion and espionage which poisons the air. You are always hearing stories about people whisked off to concentration camps for minor indiscretions.

Food is always a topic of conversation; there are few eggs, butter is rationed at a quarter of a pound a person a week, white flour is unobtainable. The lack of coffee is more unpopular than anything else.

The death rate has risen. Work days lost through sickness this winter are far greater than normal, the Deutsche Volkswirtschaft, a party paper, reports. Excessive irritability has been noticed as a result of the great nervous strain and unexcused individual absences from work.

Warsaw

IT DOES NOT SEEM POSSIBLE that one can change one's moral climate so completely overnight. Coming from Berlin to Warsaw the discomfort is suddenly lifted, the tension and rush are gone. Here is a country in Europe where life is normal and people seem not only calm but happy. The constant agitation in Danzig for the last four months, the "cold war," or "war of nerves," has tried to undermine Polish morale. But the noise at the end of the Corridor isn't noticed by Polish ears.

People in Poland are having a good time. The streets are gay with white and red flags; even the electric-light poles have red and white flowers growing on them. It is like Vienna before the war, plus a style, a panache, that is Poland's.

Poland is a young country. She has as many men of military age as France—5,500,000. Polish energy is inexhaustible. Poles have an unparalleled gusto for living, a tirelessness that is terrific. From the peasant woman striding into Warsaw on bare feet, to Marshal Smigly-Rydz, all have this unquenchable vitality which nourishes their intense patriotism.

"When Hitler four months ago demanded Danzig and a revision of the Corridor we were ready to go to war if we had to," Marshal Smigly-Rydz told me.

The answer to Hitler's demands was instant mobilization, and that mobilization was no gesture. It was the first check the Fuehrer had had in his triumphant march through Europe. Foreign Minister Beck's pro-German policy changed overnight and Poland drew herself together like a fist.

A popular gag in a political cabaret goes: "Why is Hitler the greatest man in the world? Because he ac-

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complished what no one else could, he united Poland."

Thanks to German propaganda the Ukrainian question still exists. There are three and a half million Ukrainians, roughly one-tenth of Poland's total population. The peasants of the Ukraine are miserably poor. Many of their priests are in jail, for political activity, the Poles say; for baptizing children with Ukrainian names, claim the Ukrainians.

In twelve years Poland has built the port of Gdynia which used to be a fishing hamlet surrounded by sand dunes. Now it carries nine million tons of Polish commerce compared with Danzig's seven million tons.

Among other accomplishments is the Bureau of Hygiene which was set up in the early days after the war to combat the pestilence. Smallpox has been completely stamped out; typhoid and typhus have been checked. The death rate and infant-mortality rate have been cut.

But Poland, especially in the East, is desperately poor. "Give us twenty years of peace," they say, "and we shall have a country."

But will they have these years? Even a casual observer can see that military activity is going on apace. The barracks in Danzig which formerly housed government offices are now full of S.S. men. New barracks large enough to house two and a half regiments are going up at Matzkau a short way out of town.

Danzig women will tell you it is impossible to get a dress made, for even the dressmakers are busy making uniforms. Trenches are being dug at the frontier fortifications near Danzig.

Of course German aspirations do not stop at Danzig. Danzig is the strategic point for further demands. Pomerania and Poznan next and then with luck a Polish *anschluss*. Poland blocks Hitler's ambitions both in the Baltic and in the Ukraine.

No one, however, expects immediate action. The repeated cries of "wolf" are to keep the world in an uproar and to break Poland's nerve. The Poles do not fear immediate hostilities because roads from East Prussia are still under construction and the fortifications on the Czech-Polish frontier are not yet completed.

MARY HEATON VORSE

Mexico's 1940[1]

So far three main pre-candidates have been advanced for the Presidency of Mexico: Sanchez Tapia, Avila Camacho, and Francisco Múgica. These came forward as claimants to the honor of being the candidate of the Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM). On the extreme Right, Joaquin Amaro has recently appeared, though Juan Andreu Almazán may eventually prove to be the candidate. All five are or were generals of the army, which indicates the excessive importance of that institution.

That Sanchez Tapia, a Callista connected with the semi-fascistic "Democratic Front" should have been a member of the PRM was an anomaly, as he undoubtedly represents business and feudal interests. When it became clear to his supporters that he could never hope to be chosen by the PRM, Sanchez Tapia withdrew from that Party. The general opinion is that a stronger candidate will emerge on the Right and that therefore this candidate has been sunk. The fact that a reactionary candidate whose main motive is probably personal interest or ambition should have sought to become the PRM candidate is, however, proof of the growing importance of that Party. The whole maneuver belongs to a past epoch in Mexican history; demagogy is not nowadays a sure route to success as it was in the latter days of the Calles regime. It is interesting to note, by the way, that at the last pre-election period the Calles machine was at one time hesitating between Sanchez Tapia and Cárdenas, on whom it finally decided.

The man whom the average revolutionary worker and intellectual would probably have chosen as candidate a year ago is General Múgica, until recently Minister of Transportation. Some biographical information about him may be useful. He was born, in 1884, in a mountain village of Michoacan State (Cárdenas' birthplace), his father being a village schoolmaster, a traditionally revolutionary profession in Mexico, though the son was educated in a clerical school. In 1910 he was an officer in the revolutionary army that began the work of overthrowing Porfírio Díaz. Later he fought in the Carranza forces against de la Huerta. His military record is long and thoroughly honorable.

However, it is Múgica's long connection with agrarian and other social problems which gives him most renown. Indeed, he took part in the first distribution of land, acting without the authority of Carranza, at that time chief of the Constitutional Army. After a period as customs officer in Tabasco, he occupied several military posts, in all of which his political integrity was evident. At the momentous Querétaro convention of 1917, out of which came the Mexican constitution, Múgica was the most distinguished, and the most energetic, of all the radical Left. Article 123, from which Mexican labor legislation stems (the eight-hour day, restriction on child labor, establishing of public markets, etc.) was written into the constitution largely because of the tireless fight put up by Múgica against the "democratic center." That Article 123 has never been completely in-

[1] This is the second of two articles by Ralph Bates. The first appeared in The New Republic of August 9. — THE EDITORS

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strumented is hardly Múgica's fault; the great ovation he received at the termination of the Querétaro convention is still remembered.

In Michoacan, Múgica gained the experience of governorship, and he has been Minister of National Economy. As Minister of Transport he was responsible for handing over the railways to a workers' administration. Probably this was unwise, for the railways, from the day of their construction under the old regime, have been a failure. Some improvements were made by the union administration before its recent resignation. Nevertheless, the saddling of a union with a moribund industry would not seem to prove acute judgment. A campaign of sabotage against the railways seems to have broken out, while the union was put into the position of having to refuse demands for better conditions. The demands, of course, were prompted by those right-wing elements within the union who formerly opposed such demands.

Recently, in company with Avila Camacho, Múgica resigned from office at Cárdenas' request. (At the same time Sanchez Tapia was asked to resign from command of the First Military Area, of Mexico City and district.) The President felt that it was inadvisable for ministers to campaign from their departments.

It is possible that Múgica is a little too much of a fire-eater to be convenient in this difficult period. He may, indeed, desire to eat the wrong kind of fire. He is, I think, rather dangerously half-prepared in matters of theory. He is reputed to be a headstrong anti-clerical and to have too great a readiness to launch himself upon leftist reforms at inappropriate moments. On his committee are several people who reject the Popular Front tactic upon which the PRM is based. A more important question is, can Múgica hold the army together? Can he prevent those generals opposed to Cárdenas' policy, believed to be half the total number, from revolting? This is a question which worries many Cárdenistas who are not unalterably opposed to Múgica's leftism. They are anxious, too, lest his radicalism split the PRM. The conservation of the army is fundamental. Múgica is undoubtedly an authentic revolutionary of unimpeachable honesty and a firm supporter of Cárdenas. But it is doubtful whether he is as likely to keep the Mexican Left as united as Avila Comacho.

Avila Camacho, former Minister of National Defense, has no such history as Múgica. He is a sober-minded cavalryman with very little previous concern with politics. Until recently even diligently attentive people did not know much about his political views. He was known to be a loyal coöperator in Cárdenas' government and his efficiency during the Cedillo rebellion earned approval. Nevertheless, I think most have considered him a centrist. He is prejudiced in some people's eyes by his reactionary brother, Governor of Puebla State, bitter opponent of the CTM, and by his friendship with Almazán, the soldier-financier-politician, who represents Monterrey big business. Almazán is almost certain to become the Right candidate, however, which would disembarrass Avila Camacho.

That this pre-candidate was until recently a political nonentity is not really of great importance; so was Cárdenas until the year of the elections. It seems certain that he can hold the army together. He is able, politically astute, and determined. He has been able to secure powerful backing. The National Peasants' Confederation, at its February convention, gave Avila Camacho about a million-vote majority over Múgica. It would be naïve to suppose that this huge majority was obtained by Avila Camacho's simple persuasiveness; good committee work and knowledge of local personalities no doubt helped him. Nevertheless, that he is the peasants' nominee for the PRM candidacy is clear. The national executive of the CTM has already declared him to be their candidate at the PRM convention.

This article would be neither informative nor honest if it did not record the fact that there has been a great deal of discomfort in Cárdenista circles over the manner in which the CTM executives decided upon Avila Camacho. This candidate, it has been said, is merely General Secretary Lombardo Toledano's choice. This is an exaggeration, but it is true that Lombardo's speech announcing the choice was very coldly received by the other delegates present. The impression exists that there is no mass support for Avila Camacho among the CTM rank and file. The fact that the General would probably receive the support of the CNC and was capable of controlling the army had much to do with Lombardo's decision. A great responsibility has been thrown on the executive by their declaration; they will have a hard task animating their more indifferent members and winning over the CTM supporters of Múgica. There have been rumors that the Puebla regional will desert the executive. In estimating the importance of this rumor it must be remembered that Puebla is the stronghold of the small, rival federation, the CROM.

Before passing to the reactionary pre-candidates, mention must be made of the attitude of the Mexican Communist Party as declared at its February convention. That Party is not large, but it is of great importance, not only for its influence among intellectuals, but because of its strength in the CTM, and because of the general impression in Mexico that its analyses are accurate. Hernán Laborde, the Party's leader, said that the Communists should declare for a pre-candidate at this stage. The problem, as he saw it, was to consolidate the threatened unity of the PRM around the acceptance of a detailed program which the PRM should draw up. The important thing is to ensure that the organizations which now form the PRM should present only one candidate. To that end the Communist Party has urged that Avila Camacho and Múgica consult one

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another and make a public declaration that either will withdraw and support the other when it becomes clear that one of them will secure a distinct majority in the PRM convention. That, of course, already looks like an invitation to Múgica to abandon his campaign, though according to Laborde either candidate would be acceptable to the Communist Party.

I do not see how Múgica can be considered as having a chance at the PRM convention unless he plays a leading part in elaborating the new program. And on the whole Avila Camacho is the best possible candidate; there must be no risking another fascist rebellion on a large scale. Revolt there will be, but with Cárdenas still in office and Avila Camacho to follow him it will be a failure. That Avila Camacho, if elected President, will continue the present governmental policies is certain, though there will be a difference of accent. That is as it should be; indeed, it would be better to abstain for a while from any more tasks of the size of the oil-industry reorganization. But in any case the PRM candidate will have to accept the new economic plan being elaborated at present by that Party. The new program will probably include a demand for the total break-up of the great estates, first sign that the Mexican Left has at last begun to think about its Land Reform. Such a task would be severe, and would carry with it dangers of no obscure kind. With a strong man, able to hold the army together, backed by the peasants' organization, that policy can be put through.

On the extreme Right two names have been mentioned, Generals Amaro and Almazán. It is difficult to give any biographical information about the former, since all stories told in Mexican political circles would be libelous if published. He is a man, it may be gathered, of considerable repute. He has connections with the "Democratic Front," with the Revolutionary Anti-Communist Party and with almost all of the reactionary groups. He was implicated in the Cedillo rising, though Cárdenas, as part of his "no vengeance" policy, took no action against him. Amaro has recently provoked a hurricane of opposition by a particularly inept manifesto. At the exact moment when the Mexican government and Mr. Richberg, the representative of the oil companies, were engaged in critical conversations, Amaro issued a statement condemning the expropriation and declaring that the whole policy of Cárdenas must be abandoned as unpatriotic. All reactionary leaders condemn the expropriation, of course, but most of them have been wise enough to refrain from saying so publicly. Protests from democratic organizations followed, the PRM congressional and senatorial bloc demanded his dismissal and a few days later he was expelled from the army. The lesson of Spain was sufficiently clear to President Cárdenas.

Almazán is a much more likely candidate. A soldier of recognized competence, military chief of New Leon State, he is also a wealthy man; he is intimately connected with Monterrey industries and the owner of great properties at Acapulco, the Mexican Miami. He is reputed to be behind the corrupt activities of Julio Ramirez, the leader of the small CGT trade-union federation. Ramirez at present is working hard and with ample funds, organizing the Monterrey company unions into the CGT. That very small federation, if it possesses a philosophy at all, is anarcho-syndicalist, while Ramirez appears to be a fascist. One has seen the combination elsewhere. Because of his ability and his connections with industry, Almazán would be a much more dangerous candidate than Amaro. He would have the approval of American and other foreign interests.

The problem of any rightist candidate is to unite the squabbling and maneuvering groups, all of whom, while interlocked, are intriguing one against the other. At present the task is beyond Amaro or Almazán, and some of the Mexican democrats have been deceived by this into believing that the task will be permanently impossible. This is a mistake that may cost Mexico dear. As soon as the PRM selects its candidate and presents its program the Right will coalesce. Reactionary tactics will be to take part in the November convention of the PRM and create uproar and political scandal. By dividing the Party, by careful and unscrupulous support of first one wing and then another, the supporters of Almazán—of whom there are plenty in the Party—may succeed in dismaying plain voters. After the convention an insurrection is to be expected. The convention will probably be stormy. The left wing, at present very influential, has intentions of demanding the total break-up of the haciendas. Around this the severest political battle will rage. Whatever the result some modification of the Land Reform is likely to emerge, and this will form part of the program of the PRM candidate. That candidate will probably be Avila Camacho. He may turn out to be more of a centrist than Cárdenas, but even so, strategic retreat on certain points at this time, provided the Land Reform is deepened, appears to be desirable to many who are by no means centrists.

So far as relations with the exterior are concerned, Avila Camacho will follow Cárdenas' policy. The oil properties will not be returned but the present policy of searching for a compromise will be followed, should the problem still remain unsolved. Mexico will continue to be a leader among the Latin countries; she may even play a greater role in the restoration of democracy in South America and in the political exclusion of European dictator powers. If it seems desirable for America to have a brother democratic government across the Rio Grande, capable of preventing civil war and checking the growth of German and Italian influence in the strategically critical Gulf and Caribbean seas, then Avila Camacho would be the best candidate for President.

RALPH BATES

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I'm About to Become a Crank

THIS IS TO SERVE NOTICE ON THE WORLD that I am about to become a crank. Ignoring ribald remarks from the gallery that that would be no change, I make the formal announcement that my new self will appear almost any time now, as soon as my social-security pension is large enough to support me in the style to which I am accustomed. Meanwhile, I have been getting a good deal of satisfaction out of making a list of things I shall do when crankhood overtakes me.

Several of my plans have to do with automobiles. For example, my car will be equipped with a microphone at the wheel and a powerful loudspeaker mounted on the roof. When I see a reckless driver in action, I shall tell him exactly what I think of him, in tones audible at least a mile. The loudspeaker will also help when I am waiting at a red light and the man behind me begins to blow his horn before I could possibly get my car into gear to move on.

I also plan to carry a walking-stick, the head of which is loaded with several pounds of lead. If I am crossing the street and a motorist comes roaring at me as so many of them do, for the fun of seeing the pedestrian jump for his life, I shall throw up both arms in simulated terror (or maybe it will be real) and hurl my walking-stick through his windshield. If it hits him on the head, so much the better; but even if it doesn't, he will need a new windshield.

I intend to collect from all the states the pamphlets they issue giving the names and addresses of automobile owners and their license numbers. If a reckless driver does not respond properly to my admonitions shouted through the loudspeaker, I shall note down his license and write him a letter. On the assumption that he has a moronic five-year-old son, I shall inform him sadly that on such-and-such a day, at such-and-such a place, this five-year-old was driving his father's car and did so-and-so.

When I go walking in the park I shall carry a huge pair of binoculars. If I see a mother or a nursemaid beating a small child (and it is hard to spend ten minutes in any park without witnessing such a spectacle) I shall stand over the woman and look at her through my binoculars until she desists. If she dies of mortification, I am sure it will not be a serious loss to the world.

Whenever I try to buy theatre tickets, I intend to carry a revolver loaded with blank cartridges. If I am treated with the studied insolence that is the badge of office of the theatre treasurer, I shall let out a yell and fire a few shots in his face. It is my idea that he may remember me and be more courteous next time.

I am planning to have numerous cards printed, which I shall carry on my person. They will be about 5 x 7 inches and will offer various messages in large black letters. One will be for married couples who quarrel in public, on bus tops, or in theatres, etc. It will advise them to go home and do their fighting in private, adding that they are not nearly so interesting to strangers as they think. Another set of cards will emphasize the fact that a gentleman never, never expectorates on the sidewalk.

At all times I intend to carry a short-handled pitchfork. If a lady gets into a taxicab and sits down by the door so that I have to stumble over her on my way to the far seat, I shall use the pitchfork where it will do the most good.

It will be my custom to carry on my person several packets of fresh gum. When I sit down on the bus next to a chewer whose chicle has been used so long that it snaps in an obnoxious way, I shall present him with a fresh package. He will be lucky if I don't jam the whole thing in his mouth, paper wrapping included.

Speaking of gum reminds me that I shall never be without a small bucket of gasoline, a surgeon's scalpel and an assortment of sturdy brushes. When a wad of gum gets stuck to my shoe on the street, I shall sit on the curb, and make emergency repairs. It is my hope that I can thus shame some of the people accustomed to throw their gum airily on the pavement.

Several small tear-gas bombs in my pocket will be sure to come in handy. I shall toss one to the taxi driver who, having been told to go slowly, fails to obey instructions. Another I shall use on the idiots who crowd into the door of a subway train when the passengers are trying to get off.

It is my purpose to carry with me a fried ham-and-egg sandwich and a small bottle of milk, on such occasions as I am invited out to dinner (they won't be numerous after I have become a crank). If my hostess proves to be one of those persons who invite you for half-past seven and then don't serve the dinner until nine o'clock, I intend to announce loudly that I am starving, and pull out and consume my snack before the eyes of the assembled and envious guests.

When I visit the home of friends who have obnoxious children—you know what I mean, students at modern schools—I shall never fail to carry a few of my Child Snuffers with me. These operate on the principle of a candle snuffer, only much larger. A big cone of heavy material fits down over the head and shoulders of the child; within there is a small sponge saturated with chloroform, guaranteed to produce slumber for an hour or more. One of these snuffers, pushed down firmly over the head and shoulders, is recommended in the case of a child who (a) wants you to kiss dolly, (b) tries to recite "Little Lamb Who Made Thee,"

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(c) wishes to climb on your lap and share with you the last shreds of his chocolate bar.

I am not (at least not yet) so much of a crank as to suppose I have a monopoly on the good ideas. I should be glad to hear from fellow cranks as to their own plans for eliminating pet grievances.

It is interesting to reflect that not so many years ago, an American showing signs of incipient crankdom would have been told sternly that this country was no place for him. America, he would have learned, was the land where one must conform or take the consequences. Europe was where anyone could do as he pleased, dress as he pleased, with never a lifted eyebrow. But time has brought full cycle. Today it is the Europeans, in most countries at any rate, who must live and talk and think exactly like everyone else, under what amounts to penalty of death. America is one of the few places in the world where the luxury of crankdom, that ultimate test of a civilized society, may still be enjoyed. B. B.

Air, Oil and Barges

ANOTHER FRONT in the war against the oil monopolies is now found at Memphis, Tennessee. W. H. Reed, an independent oil jobber and one of the handful of independents left in Tennessee, is petitioning the FCC to question the renewal of license to a local radio station, WHBQ, which discontinued his contracted series of twenty-six talks when he began telling interested listeners how the major oil companies are garnering profits out of so-called public waterways; those same profits which company officials and even members of Congress say are passed on to the consumer.

In the first talks of his weekly series (none containing advertising), Mr. Reed explained how independent oil jobbers buy on the market gasoline that is shipped by water to Memphis from the New Orleans refining district. The independent jobber is required to pay rail charges on this gasoline based on the freight rate from Shrevesport to Memphis, more than two cents per gallon, though the gasoline did not come by rail. The cost of barging this gasoline to Memphis is less than half a cent per gallon. So the oil companies net more than one and one half cents per gallon on rail charges for no rail services. If a marine-terminal tax of only one cent per gallon were assessed, Mr. Reed suggested, Tennessee would gain more than $2,000,000 annually in much needed revenues.

The first talk brought an electric response, especially to these figures. Public servants in Memphis had been insisting that citizens would save by supporting these waterways. Representative Culkin had said, in a talk on April 3, 1939, over the NBC-Red network, that water-transportation profits in gasoline would go to the consumer, like many other profits of that kind; though he later was "amazed" at some figures Mr. Reed sent him, and promised that he would take the matter up with the oil company "which furnished me the figures." The response was so great that Mr. Reed repeated the same talk the next Friday. And on the following Tuesday Governor Cooper's forces introduced a marine-terminal-tax bill into the House and Senate. But pressure was strong. The oil lobby in Nashville started to work on the Governor. The Public Utilities Commissioner, W. D. Hudson, happened to be the owner of a terminal at Clarksville, leased to Standard Oil, for which he worked there as agent. So the Governor changed his mind and publicly abandoned the bill, which died on the calendar. This did not happen, however, until nearly two months after WHBQ denied Mr. Reed the privilege of buying time.

WHBQ's program director served notice on Mr. Reed when he first mentioned Standard Oil by name. His reason for barring the talks was that they no longer served "public interest, convenience and necessity." There could be a better reason in the fact that Hoyt Wooten, owner of WREC, CBS's Memphis outlet, also owns a heavy interest in WHBQ; and Standard Oil spends thousands annually with WREC in a heavy advertising schedule. Mr. Reed's offense seems really to have been his explanation of the statements of oil companies in local papers declaring that the profits of public water transportation would go to the consumer. He showed that these statements were all refuted in the sworn testimony before the ICC rate hearing in Memphis of A. M. Stephens, general traffic manager of Standard Oil of Kentucky, in which Mr. Stephens repeatedly admitted, under questioning, that the "money we make on our water terminals, we put in our pocket." Mr. Reed appealed from the gag by printing all the scripts of the eight talks in The Memphis Press-Scimitar. And he is still trying to regain his rights on a moderately priced radio station, with the assistance of Representative Coffee (Wash.), who early in the series volunteered aid if any local station attempted to censor his talks.

Mr. Reed's fellow independent in Memphis, W. H. McKinnon, has already brought suit against Standard Oil for $468,000 in an action, his attorneys say, patterned after the Madison case. The remaining independents in Tennessee are few, but they are beginning to equate air, oil and barges with a degree of stubbornness that may compensate for their small number. They may yet give the oil trust some of the purgative it took in Wisconsin. And perhaps they also will show that the taxpayers, who are so willingly dredging the rivers, are themselves, in Tennessee, being dredged for about $3,000,000 a year in profits on the rivers they make navigable. This makes rivers mighty expensive, even as scenery. JOE HORRELL

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Washington Notes

Roosevelt Trips Himself

WHEN, A FEW DAYS BACK, the House roared down the spending bill, Mr. Roosevelt took a great defeat. That is obvious and undeniable. But what lesson should we, as liberals, draw from it? Observers in Washington are saying it shows that Mr. Roosevelt no longer has a majority of Congress, that the country is turning against him. It can be proved that this is just not true. Mr. Roosevelt can blame no one for the loss of the spending bill but himself.

Suppose we investigate what happened in the closing days of Congress. Let us begin with the House vote. The House refused to consider the spending bill by a vote of 193 to 166 or by a margin of 27. But some 70 members did not vote at all, and of these 39 were unpaired. Immediately after the vote, I went over the list of absent members with an administration spokesman. He identified 29 men who were definitely committed to the bill and who would have voted for it if they had been present. Another five members he knew to be favorable to the bill; almost surely they would have supported it.

Why is it that the administration failed to have these men on the floor of the House when the vote was taken? Two or three absentees were honestly sick. But of the remainder some were keeping speaking engagements, others were chauffering their wives and children away from the Washington heat. It is entirely true that the official Democratic leadership of the House broke in pieces toward the end of the session. But the White House has literally scores of talented young men at its command who could have acted as collie dogs to round up the straying sheep.

Forty-seven Democrats voted with the Republicans against the spending bill. Perhaps half of them were generally sympathetic to the administration's aims. It is incredible that they would have refused a direct request from one of Mr. Roosevelt's representatives. An illuminating commentary is the fact that Mr. Roosevelt's noisiest enemy in the House, Mr. Gene Cox of Georgia, voted in favor of the spending bill while a liberal like Mr. Allen of Pennsylvania voted against it. Mr. Cox obeyed a party discipline that was never applied to administration sympathizers.

But the House vote, despite the newspaper alarums it has stirred up, was of less importance than the fight in the Senate, where the bill was butchered until it was unrecognizable. By the time the House came to act, it had become a bill for farm relief, with a definite anti-labor bias. In its Senate version, it bore a vicious amendment proposed by Senator Tydings, forbidding political contributions by labor unions without express authorization from each union member. The Tydings amendment might easily have been upheld in conference between Senate and House, and would have made endless, nagging difficulties for Labor's Non-Partisan League and New York's American Labor Party. In short, it is debatable whether a conscientious New Deal member of the House ought not to have voted against the bill.

If the administration's prestige was hit in the House, the real shellacking it took was in the Senate. The Republican representation in the Senate, unlike that in the House, is insignificant. The Republicans and avowed coalitionists, taken together, are less than a third of the membership. The month-in-month-out New Deal vote in the Senate ranges between fifty and sixty. Except for the two special cases of Mr. Roosevelt's monetary powers and neutrality, the Senate has been as pliable as an old shoe. Moreover, Mr. Roosevelt ultimately obtained his power to devalue, and no direct vote on neutrality was ever called.

The Senate's evisceration of the spending bill was chiefly the New Deal's fault. With the possible exception of the 1935 tax bill, no major legislation has been worse bungled. Consider the section of the bill for toll roads. As it happens, the Bureau of Public Roads has just completed a remarkable report on future highway building. It is a most intelligent job of social planning. The toll-road proposal of the spending bill was in substantial contradiction to the Bureau's report, yet no administration leader attempted to defend it, or to explain why the administration's own road agency had been neglected.

Another section of the spending bill provided for government purchase of railroad equipment. As readers of The New Republic know, this was a scheme worked out by New Deal intellectuals under the present Mr. Justice Douglas. Right or wrong, it represents some of the most arduous economic thinking done by the administration. Yet the White House spokesmen never bothered to explain its merits. When Mr. Burt Wheeler, the Senate's supposed expert on railroad legislation, arose in his place and said that equipment buying was unnecessary, senatorial supporters of the administration were hopelessly silent.

Mr. Roosevelt's failure to control Mr. Jesse Jones during the course of the spending bill revealed scandalous weakness of character. It is not far from true to say that the spending bill was lobbied to death, and the chief lobbyist was Mr. Jones, head of the Federal Loan Agency and, in theory, one of Mr. Roosevelt's chief aides. Mr. Jones damned both the railroad and small-loans sections of the bill with praise so faint that only one of the War Department's motorized listening devices, or mechanical "ears," could have detected it.

But we have still to penetrate to the administration's chief crime. That was to delay the spending bill, with the crucial importance it has for the 1940 election, until the last days of the session. It is always ungracious to say I-told-you-so. Nevertheless, readers will recall that all during March I harped—probably boringly—on the necessity of introducing a public-works bill. This showed no especial political wisdom on my part. Any two-year-old knows that the end of a session is a bad time to put through controversial legislation. Mr. Roosevelt ought to have known it if he remembered the holding-company, Supreme Court reorganization and wage-and-hour fights. I have questioned a number of New Deal sympathizers in the House. All say that last March the spending bill could have been enacted with reasonable ease. If it had been made a companion measure to the WPA appropriation bill, they think it could have been horse-traded through without a murmur.

The horrible aspect of Mr. Roosevelt's defeat is that, although it was not by the enmity of Congress or by a conservative tide in the country, but by his own bumble-

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fingeredness, the defeat itself is likely to set Congressmen and voters against him. It enables Washington correspondents, with seeming plausibility, to say that he has lost his touch, that he is through, washed up, a dead horse. Political prestige is something like a bank's solvency; once it is questioned it ceases to exist. For liberals to lose in a good fight is tragic; there is no respectable adjective when they lose from stepping on their own feet.

Washington T. R. B.

Other People's Money

How to Tell a Liberal

THE TORY UPRISING in Washington which has resulted in a series of reverses for our great liberal leader must be a subject of concern to every true liberal. Who is a liberal and what is liberalism—or progressivism or whatever it is that it should be called—is one of those points on which speculative minds may struggle for hours. But fortunately we have at the moment a test which is definitive. A liberal or progressive or what-have-you is a follower of President Roosevelt. A liberal measure is one which President Roosevelt supports. And I know of no greater tribute to the generous, open-minded attitude of our traditional liberal leaders than the manner in which they have abandoned all other tests and surrendered to this one. How can I doubt the mental integrity of some old-line liberal—even a left-wing liberal—when I see him lustily cheering for a plan to establish the coal owners of the bituminous regions as the executive and legislative rulers of the economic province of coal? Something inside that man tells him that this is not liberalism or progressivism or Marxism or even democratism; but his loyalty to his new leader tells him that the old standards are no longer sound and that if Franklin is for it—it's liberal and its okay.

This is a great help in the present tory crisis in Washington. Surely there can be no doubt about where a liberal must stand on a thing like the Hatch bill. For over a hundred years liberals in this country have battled against the hateful principle of the civil service and everything connected with it. The grand old Democratic Party in New York City has waged incessant war against the principle of selecting men on the merit system and then keeping them out of politics. The right of the political leader to keep his legions happy and loyal by putting them in jobs and then keeping them there by using those loyal legions in the campaign and around the polls, has been one of the first items in the creed of such great liberals as Dick Croker, Charlie Murphy and John Curry. And the great principle has been held aloft by such true-hearted liberals as Senator Guffey, Representative Sullivan, Mayor Hague—not to mention Jim Farley and Franklin Roosevelt. True, Mr. Roosevelt once said that he believed profoundly in the civil service and wanted both parties to come together and agree on the subject. But this was before he became governor. And it was, beyond a doubt, one of those intervals of doubt which come into every man's career when he strays for a moment from the grand old path of true liberalism.

So now, when we see a batch of Republicans, and Democrats too—tories all—fighting to put an end to what they call the "drilling of the public payroll" and the "marshalling of the faithful to the polls" and the "shaking down of office-holders for campaign drives," can any liberal doubt where he would stand?

With this bill now a law, there can be no more Jackson Day dinners—or at least none at $50 and $100 a plate. There can be no more book sales to the faithful. There can be no more levying of contributions on the federal office-holders in Indiana and New Jersey and Louisiana and New York and Chicago and any place else, for that matter, either by Democrats or Republicans. There can be no more campaign contributions levied on relief workers. Of course, our great leader was driven into a corner and compelled to say that he believed in this kind of tory rascality. But after all, that's politics. We know where he stands and we know where we liberals stand. God helping us, we can do no other.

There was another problem facing the liberals. It was in the spending-lending bill. There was a plan to make $350,000,000 available to the railroads to buy new equipment. That was stricken out on the motion of Burt Wheeler, the hated tory from Montana. No one can doubt that Wheeler is a tory. He has opposed half a dozen measures sponsored by our liberal leader and that makes him a tory.

There are a lot of simple-minded people who insist that Wheeler was fighting the battles of the progressives when Mr. Roosevelt had only two planks in his platform—and they were the League of Nations and the Biggest Navy on Earth. They say Wheeler was being hounded by the old Harding detectives when Jim Farley and Joe Guffey and other great liberal leaders were playing around with either Tammany Hall or Wall Street. But what has that got to do with it? Everybody knows that the railroads have been the great pets of the liberals—that a true-hearted liberal will do anything in this world to save a railroad stockholder and help a railroad president to hold his job. They are trying to stave off bankruptcy and dispossession by having the government lend them nearly half a billion dollars upon security that no one else will touch with a forty-foot pole. The President rightly takes the liberal position—lend to the railroads, save the roads from bankruptcy, save the stockholders and the executives and the railroad bankers. Obviously the liberals must cheer for this. They must therefore brand the Wheeler attack on the lending bill as just another surrender by Wheeler to the forces of reaction.

I know it is a little confusing. It gets even more so when we liberals look around and find McNutt sitting close to our leader and fingering the liberals' favorite instrument—the Social Security Act—and when we see other such valiant liberals in places of power. But we need never worry. All we have to do is to forget everything else and remember that the true test of a liberal is whether he is for Roosevelt or not.

JOHN T. FLYNN

Because Heywood Broun is in San Francisco at the American Newspaper Guild convention, his column is omitted this week. — THE EDITORS

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Speaking of Jazz: II

PATIENT READERS will remember that two weeks ago I started a review of three books on jazz. Although jazz criticism has been a hole-and-corner business in this country, it has shown a tendency to crystallize into certain forms and superstitions; and for that reason the unimpassioned, non-partisan approach of Sargeant's "Jazz: Hot and Hybrid" has been needed badly. It is still needed, however. In the first place, Mr. Sargeant's rather temporary interest is in the over-all synthesis, rather than in the shades of difference and of development which have got our jazz critics so increasingly overheated. In the second place, he knows too little of what he is talking about; and to those who have grown up with this music his exact analysis is something like a canon on American prose style by an Oxford graduate who had read with attention everything James Fenimore Cooper ever wrote.

I mentioned his getting off to a bad start by having to rely on "recommendations." But on top of this, he develops a considerable slew of his own in the way of not quite hearing what he was listening to. He knows that a drummer is the key man of a rhythm section, but then in the promotion of mirth he dismisses everything but snare and bass drum as "kitchenware," apparently assuming that the essential ride and clamp of a high-hat cymbal are just Mrs. Joe Jones's eggs frying in the pan. He describes Krupa as tapping on the rim of his snare drum as though the lagging but dominant push in the head of the big drum, and the intensive mounting roll with stick or wirebrush were just something cut out of paper like funny hats. In his comments on the use of the string bass he muffs the principle—revealed at such pain to sousaphone players almost fifteen years ago—of an extended and rising beat. And when he goes on with unmarred seriousness to define the place in the modern band of the banjo, which lived and died in an epoch that was over by 1930 and for a very significant reason, some may take it as gospel and some will make a rude noise.

In the voices of the orchestra he makes a cleaner definition than most—though here again he is handicapped by the misfortune of not having listened. It isn't only a weakness of words: Mr. Sergeant says that saxophone work is characterized by a melodic line, without having paid much attention to the work of Bud Freeman, Coleman Hawkins, Choo Berry; and then says that in brass it is noticeably different—without considering the work of Beiderbecke (cornet) and Teagarden (trombone), which is to say, the best lyric work that jazz has produced. He puts on the sneer at tinpan alley, which is a pretty old set of crepe whiskers by now surely, for the "alley" pretty much means published music, and runs from W. C. Handy to Hoagy Carmichael.

I suppose he is to be forgiven for such sweeping statements as that no jazz instrumentalist, however clever, could hold down a chair in a symphony orchestra: in the first place, he is trying to compare the non-comparable, choosing to forget that the jazz man ran away from the school of musical expression as a digest of Italianate symbols long ago, and set up his own discipline (which no symphony man could touch, either); in the second and main place he has apparently never seen a good jazz man work. It is harder to forgive him when, wrapping his blunders around him, he gives jazz a kindly pat on the head and sends it home to supper, never having rightly seen it, or cared to. The book is learned enough to pass as the authoritative study among the highly educated people who are still as ignorant about what is rocking the air around their ears as they were when twenty years ago they read avidly in Etude or The New Republic that this here new jazz was a vulgar fad, and would be gone by tomorrow. As an unconscious inheritor of these fastidious but poorly informed prophecies, Mr. Sargeant writes only half the book that his book should be. For those who know the subject, it is a clarification. For those who wish to learn about the subject from it, half a book is worse poison than no book at all.

Wilder Hobson's "American Jazz Music" is the first book to get the subject fully outlined. It is a short book, not more than 160 pages of running text, but it is written in good easy English by a man to whom the field is as familiar as the back yard at home. One of the few who tried to swing an instrument around when both he and jazz were quite recent and hardly intellectual, he grew up into a Fortune young man without forgetting that he had learned about polyrhythm from "The Charleston." His book is hasty and derivative in point of view, but its sketch of musical development—the Southern watershed emptying into New Orleans, the mixing elements as Dixieland jazz came up the Mississippi to Chicago, etc.—is the first reliable primer on what has become a national art form. It is a good induction as well, for Hobson's best chapters are those describing the "language" of jazz, where it came from and how it is doing. With seriousness but no stuffy pomp, with a light direct touch but no glibness, he touches off the salient things you should understand to listen to jazz music.

But while it is an understanding survey, it is not a scholarly piece of work, not in the least final. Too many myths accepted at face value; too little independent thinking. And its historical side is superficial. For just one example, I consulted the chapter on jazz in New York recently for possible checks on a job I was doing: I found little that wasn't common Down Beat gossip, and a general lack of grasp and penetration.

The trouble is that he has accepted attitudes without inspecting them, taken a debatable position without realizing any need for stating and defending it. Briefly, he is talking through somebody else's hat, namely, the hat of John Hammond—who doesn't wear one. In one way Hammond is the ideal critic, fighting for what he thinks is good, fighting hard with time and money and infinite energy. But he is no thinking critic and as full of chinks and sharp bias as a bag of nails. He is to be respected and thanked, but not safely followed as mentor. It is this assumption of fashion-patterns in thought—e.g., that the musical days of New Orleans and Chicago were heaven on earth, although you'd never seen them; that white men could never be colored or (ergo) true musicians—which weakens any survey. Hobson's book, admittedly a sketchy job in the first place, is thus a good primer for today, but not for tomorrow. Jazz as a movement is much larger, more subtle and complex, than the sum of all its analysts—none of whose work, incidentally, has measured up to the intuitive expression of Dorothy Baker's novel. But as a whole they form a groundwork; they are an incentive and a signal of encouragement.

OTIS FERGUSON

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The Bandwagon

Representative George Pray of Rochester, who introduced a bill in the last Legislature to do away with hanging in this state, last night said that he would make another effort, because New Hampshire must do away with the rope. He said that if the state had an electric chair there would be more capital convictions. – *From The Boston Globe.*

During the quarrel over sanctions, and later in the Non-Intervention Committee during the Spanish civil war, Italy's envoy, it must be confessed, made himself thoroughly disagreeable to his opponents. The sporting spirit of the British, however, made them approve Count Grandi all the more. – *From a dispatch by Augur in The New York Times.*

She added that moral rearmament means a new economic future for doctors. Since putting her fees under the guidance of God she has been able to save the stress and strain of usual problems of collection and at the same time has found it more efficient—making 98-percent collections in comparison with the usual 50 percent—with no aftermath of resentment. – *Dr. Irene Gates, quoted in The New York Times.*

Good-night, Nurse

Nursing is not just a job and so trade unions and strikes have no place in it. As members of a profession you must be more concerned with giving than getting. . . . And while material reward is important enough, it may not be raised to a place of such importance as to make a lack of financial remuneration or even a lack of physical necessities worthy reasons for refusing to render this service. – *From The American Journal of Nursing.*

Piece Work

Twenty-two candidates are after the job of coroner in "Bloody Harlan" County. The Coroner is paid by fee. – *From The Los Angeles Times.*

What, No Umbrella?

A Wedgwood teapot, sugar bowl and cream jug bearing the royal portraits, friendship mottoes, American-eagle knobs and British-lion handles, cost but $20. – *From the About the House department in The New Yorker.*

What's in a Name?

J. Ellis Kirkham's season at North Plainfield, N. J., closed abruptly last Saturday, the first fatality of the summer. The last bill was a new play called "The Depression's Over." – *From "News of the Stage" in The New York Times.*

Rose-Colored Glasses Department

A great tendency in the modern world necessarily leans to simplify, on the one hand, the given national boundaries, and on the other hand, to refit them more kindly. . . . And for the best possible survival of Europe's culture, social life and forces, rebarbarization to some extent seems absolutely unavoidable. This may come, most hopefully, from Germany and Italy. – *From an article in Japan Today, quoted in The New Statesman and Nation.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

Hollywood Organized

SIR: In his laudatory review of Nathanael West's "The Day of the Locust" Mr. Edmund Wilson says, "It takes only a few years of Hollywood to render [the writer] incapable of anything but turning up at the League of American Writers and delivering bosom-beating speeches, reminiscent of the Moscow trials, in which he repudiates the frivolity of his past career and excoriates the Fascists in Spain, without ever, however, doing anything to expose that other campaign against art, education and social justice, which is being successfully carried on by his employers no further away than Hollywood."

Mr. Wilson should keep up with the newer Hollywood. Among the members of the League of American Writers in Hollywood are leaders of the whole democratic movement, of the Screen Writers' Guild (and if you don't think they have been attacking their employers ask Mr. Joseph Schenck); of the Motion Picture Democratic Committee, the Hollywood Anti-Nazi League (which only two weeks ago pilloried Mr. Louis B. Mayer for his entertainment of Nazi editors); of Associated Film Audiences, which has carried on campaigns against all studios that turn out anti-labor or pro-fascist films; of the Steinbeck Committee, which has been uttering dire threats at Mr. Darryl Zanuck if he does any hocus pocus with "Grapes of Wrath"; and numerous other organizations whose object is to have Hollywood line up with social justice. The Hollywood studios have been turning their hands toward more realistic and better movies, precisely because of the work of these American writers, members of the League of American Writers and their colleagues in the other fields of art in Hollywood.

But the responsibility for better movies is not alone on the shoulders of the writers in Hollywood; it is on the shoulders of the American people. The Screen Writers' Guild could get its essential demand of respect for writers in Hollywood in a twinkling, if the consumers of movies demanded the pictures Mr. Edmund Wilson, we'll say, would approve.

Carmel, Calif. ELLA WINTER

Good News from Montana

SIR: The Keeney case in which you took an interest has finally been won. By a 4-1 decision of the Montana Supreme Court, handed down on June 17, 1939, the District Court decision was upheld, reinstating me in my position as librarian and professor of Library Economy at Montana State University, and awarding me payment of back salary from September 1, 1937,

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when I was "unlawfully precluded" from performing my duties.

To all of those who have supported me in this long and arduous fight, Mrs. Keeney and I feel a debt of gratitude that we can repay only by continuing to stand steadfastly for those issues all progressive forces believe in—civil liberties, freedom of teaching and inquiry, job security, and a decent standard of living for all. . . .

Missoula, Mont. PHILIP O. KEENEY

Dynamite

SIR: I have followed with attention and interest the little dispute about the Committee for Cultural Freedom [June 28].

I saw the growth of Italian fascism. The democratic and social democratic forces coöperated actively in the growth of the movement, because they wanted to fight communism. And the consequences are evident. Italian Masonry actually gave a good deal of money to fascism for the March on Rome. Now there is no more Masonry in Italy. Many democrats who actually helped fascism were later beaten, killed or imprisoned.

I believe the liberals of this country should not fall into the same error, which will cost them liberty or life later on. After helping fascism to grow, they will be the natural victims.

Although I have great respect for every one of the members of the Committee, I feel they are engaged in a very dangerous game.

Topeka, Kan. JULES VELAZQUEZ

Nuts for Our Side

SIR: In your June 7 issue you ask quaintly and oh so Jewishly—"Who Is Behind Moseley?" Well—there are quite a lot of us behind him and beside him and all around him!

We are expecting more and better things of him than ever! We know how very very many more Americans there are "joining up" each day! Yes Mr. & Mrs. Jew Republic there are plenty of Gentile Christian Americans who "aren't having" any more Jews run *their* country! Funny isn't it! Well your Mr. Bruce Barton and Parnell Thomas and all the rest of the dupes are still on your slimy side however—you are quite welcome to all of them. We are glad to be rid of the bootlickers of Jewish Influence—Gold.

I read your "backs to the Wall" sheet quite regularly and I enjoy your writhings. It is good to realize how hard pressed you all are beginning to feel! That of course is hard on you—but nuts for our side.

"Still and all" you cannot fail to understand how happy we all feel with Mr. Adolph Hitler on the job over in Europe *and* Gen. Moseley over here! We have taken it for *so long* it's a blessed relief to have someone else feel the pinch of closing opportunities!

Keep on telling me all your plans so I can lick my lips.

East Orange, N. J. AMERICAN *pro* NAZI

Education in Michigan

SIR: In the July 26 issue of The New Republic, Denny Hammond in an article, "Education on the Skids," makes the following statement:

"According to a survey of thirty-six states made by the American Federation of Teachers, eleven cut their state aid from the 1936 figure. Michigan with a drop of $19,000,000—50 percent—headed the list."

This is not in accord with the facts. Actually the amount of state aid for school support has increased in Michigan every year from 1933, when the property-tax-limitation amendment came into operation, until it reached a total of approximately $44,000,000 for the school year ending June, 1939. State aid for the year ending June, 1936, the year cited by Mr. Hammond, approximated $37,000,000.

The legislature which adjourned on June 30 did cut the state appropriation $5,000,000 below last year's receipts, setting $39,000,000 annually for the school years ending June, 1940, and June, 1941. This, you will note, is still $2,000,000 above the 1936 figure.

ARTHUR NELSON

Detroit, Mich. Executive Sec., Mich. Fed. of Teachers

Swank from Squantum

SIR: George Seldes's article in the August 2 issue, "News Is Suppressed," would be more convincing if he did not resort to the very practice which he condemns—the partial suppression of news.

On page 353, he says, "If, of course, the papers published the truth about food, drugs, iceboxes, automobiles, cigarettes, etc., there would be no place for Consumers' Union, and that would be a pity."

Is your own "suppression" due to: (1) Consumers' Research labor relations of which you do not approve? (2) The fact that Consumers' Union advertises in your magazine while Consumers' Research does not?

Squantum, Mass. GREENOUGH ABBE

Labor News in a Haystack

SIR: Thank you for Michael Daro's fine article on how a Continental newspaper should be read (July 26). I applied the correspondent's method to Mr. John L. Lewis' Garner speech, and thanks to the method, I learned that Mr. Lewis was not flattering to Mr. Garner.

Barrington, Vt. PERRY MURPHY

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Dr. Robley N. Ellis of the Yale University Institute of Human Relations, New Haven, thanks us for printing S. I. Hayakawa's "The Meaning of Semantics" (August 2). His letter emphasizes the importance, from a psychiatrist's point of view, of general semantics. . . . Elmer Gertz, 821 Sunnyside Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, is writing a social history of The Chicago Tribune and would like to enter into correspondence with anyone who has information or ideas on the subject. . . . A. Grant Pardo, of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce of the Government of Puerto Rico, writes objecting to the editorial paragraph in The New Republic of May 31, "A Headache for the Admiral."

A subscriber has an offer to make to a German refugee. He needs a tutor to help him to a reading knowledge of German for Ph.D. requirements; the examination will be in the early fall. He cannot afford to pay tutoring rates, but offers room and board in a large pleasant house in Connecticut in exchange for a daily hour or so of tutoring and German conversation at meals. Any Germany refugee who is interested in the offer should write to "V. H." c/o The New Republic.

Charles F. Speare, financial editor of the North American Newspaper Alliance, writes from Salisbury, Vermont to congratulate us on Harold Laski's two articles (July 12 and 19), "America Revisited." . . . J. W. Swain of Champaign, Illinois, offers a definition of the term, "aggressor nation:" "The 'aggressor nation' is the one whose ballyhoo department has lost the first round." . . . Vito Marcantonio, national president of the International Labor Defense, 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City, appeals for contributions to the Summer Milk Fund, to help the boys and girls in the United States and abroad whose fathers are political prisoners.

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Books in Review

The Airplane in War

READERS OF THE NEW REPUBLIC do not need to be told that Major George Fielding Eliot is, like Hanson Baldwin of The New York Times, one of the rarest anomalies of nature, a military critic whose expertizing is tempered by common sense. Indeed, his latest book, "Bombs Bursting in Air,"[1] might well be subtitled "Common Sense About the Possibilities and Limitations of the Airplane in War." Admitting his ultimate ignorance about the subject—an ignorance which everyone including Germany's General Goering and America's Charles A. Lindbergh must share—Major Eliot draws only cautiously provisional lessons from the "poor men's wars" that have been fought in Ethiopia, Spain and China. As Major Eliot says, there has been no full-out trial of the airplane's ability to shatter the civilian morale of a great metropolis such as London; the closest thing to such a trial was staged over Barcelona in March, 1938, when a real continuity of effort in bombing destroyed the entire mental life of a million and a half people for more than forty hours. Ghoulish as they were, however, the thirteen closely spaced raids on Barcelona did not constitute a real test of the air *Blitzkrieg*, or lightning war, theories which Goering and Mussolini picked up from the late Italian General Douhet.

Lacking any conclusive field of reference, Major Eliot does the best he can. If Germany should choose to attack London every hour for forty-eight hours, using fifty bombing planes per mission and 2,000 altogether, the morale of the British Empire *might* crack beyond repair. But, at best, the gamble would be a desperate one; and if such horrendous *Schrecklichkeit* merely served to stiffen the will of the entire civilized west against Germany it would be suicidal for the Nazis to risk it. So far as we can generalize from Spain, airplanes cannot win wars; they are best employed as adjuncts to the movement of ground forces—in reconnaissance, in preliminary ground-strafing, in the disruption of production and supply. Presumably the German and Italian general staffs have digested the Spanish experience; and if only someone could whisper the little secret into the ear of Neville Chamberlain we might see an end to the era of international blackmail. On the other hand, London is, like Barcelona, close to the sea—which means that it is peculiarly vulnerable to bombing attack from the air. And Downing Street is a street in London.

It is a hoary military maxim that every new measure of attack breeds its counter-measure of defense. The anti-aircraft gun, however, is at its least effective when planes suddenly appear without warning from over the ocean, gliding in silently over a port city from great heights. London, which is practically on the coast, is thus far more exposed than inland Paris or Berlin, and the Nazis have not been slow to use this fact as their chief weapon of blackmail. Major Eliot, however, pushes his facts a little too hard when he contrasts Berlin's safety with London's peril. For, if the disruption of production is one of the required aims of air bombing, British air attacks would hardly be wasted on non-industrial Berlin; it would be far more profitable to direct them at the Ruhr, which is practically on Germany's western frontier. Disruption of her Rhineland industry might not hopelessly cripple Germany; but it would certainly help. As for Italy, her ports of Genoa and Spezia and her capital at Rome are even more vulnerable than London: air raids organized from Corsica could ram the Balearic-Barcelona lesson straight back down the throat of Mussolini, as he must well know. Two can play the game of blackmail, so why doesn't Daladier get busy?

But what does all this portend for the United States? Major Eliot's figures for the effective bombing radius of planes flying in formation and carrying reasonably heavy bomb loads is 500 to 750 miles, which would seem to eliminate New York, Seattle and the Panama Canal from the danger zone for a long time to come. There have been rumors of specially cooled airplane motors, of uniquely potent fuels and of super-destructive incendiary bombs which, if true, would all combine to make Major Eliot's figures hopelessly antiquated overnight. Vincent Sheean speaks of a secret Nazi bomb in his "Not Peace But a Sword." But, as yet, no one seems able to track the rumors down.

Granting Major Eliot's facts, his air strategy for the United States would seem to be incontestable. Following Mahan (though not in the jingoistic way in which Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge once followed him), Major Eliot insists that our frontiers are sea frontiers, *this* side of Brest and Bordeaux and Ireland. We should, therefore, refuse to listen to beguiling voices which picture France, Belgium and Great Britain as our buffer states. The aim of our diplomacy should be limited to preventing German and Italian acquisition of air bases in the Azores, in Iceland, in Greenland, in northern South America, or on the bulge of Africa (though African bases would hardly prove fatal). And, on the principle that a good attack is the best defense, we should go in for long-range bombers capable of carrying the fight to enemy fleets and airplane carriers far out over the sea.

It is at this point that one wishes Major Eliot had been more critical of the *political* aspects of current United States military policy. If we are appropriating too much money for short-range bombers and not enough for long-range bombers (which would seem to be the gist of Major Eliot's complaints), doesn't this point to an undeclared purpose in the minds of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of War Louis Johnson and other extra-legislative formulators of policy in Washington? Isn't it barely possible that our air program is not primarily designed to meet the needs of "hemisphere defense"? Isn't it at least arguable that our plane factories are being geared to turn out the types of plane needed for another overseas expeditionary force? I

[1] Bombs Bursting in Air: The Influence of Air Power on International Relations, by George Fielding Eliot. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock. 183 pages. $1.75.

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am a neophyte in these matters, and anything I might say of an *ex cathedra* nature would be subject to great discount. But, in a democracy, citizens have the duty of asking pertinent questions; and we need some plain speaking on this point from people who are in a position to know.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

Poetry of the Will

Poetry and Anarchism, by Herbert Read. New York: The Macmillan Company. 126 pages. $2.
Modern Poetry: A Personal Essay, by Louis MacNeice. New York: The Oxford University Press. 215 pages. $3.
The Poet's Defense, by J. Bronowski. New York: The Macmillan Company. 258 pages. $2.50.

OF THE POINTS OF VIEW represented by these writers, I find Mr. Herbert Read's the most sympathetic, and the most difficult for brief exposition, as well as the most difficult to understand. Negatively, Mr. Read attacks dictatorships as the final development of the super-state, whose tyranny ever since the Renaissance has steadily undermined the spiritual life; hitherto associated with finance-capitalism, the tyrant state now takes another form in the so-called Russian experiment, a kind of dictatorship that Mr. Read repudiates as strongly as Nazism; and in this repudiation Mr. Read repents of his earlier communism and asks for a revival of the "essential communism" in anarcho-syndicalist doctrine.

If he were an American Mr. Read would doubtless connect his somewhat refined version of anarchism—which for him is a belief in the autonomous community and the least government—with Jeffersonian democracy. But here he has a considerable advantage over the merely political anarchist or the American Jeffersonian. He knows that political theory is not enough. Mere political idealism in our time is an application of a wider idealistic fallacy which Mr. Read understands in terms of medieval philosophy. He says, "We have two possibilities: to discover truth, and to create beauty." Our fallacy consists in trying to create truths that have no relation to reality, and in trying to discover beauty "where it cannot be found—in reason, in logic, in experience." Political dictatorship is an expression of metaphysical idealism; it imposes from above a created and false "truth," and must employ brute force to maintain it against the nature of men. "The negation of the idealism of Hegel," says Mr. Read, "is realism: the realism of Aristotle, of Albertus and Aquinas; the realism of the empirical tradition in modern science. . . ."

But just how men are to hold to this realism in the autonomous community Mr. Read never quite makes plain. Historically it appears that the alternative to the super-state is a regime of some kind of other-worldliness powerfully enough organized, as in the Middle Ages, to control politics and to prevent the emergence of the "economic man." Like many men today, Mr. Read makes a strictly protestant return to the scholastic insight, which he very much desires to get without the institutions that go with it; for him these institutions—say the Roman Catholic Church or even the Anglican—are a priestly tyranny as bad as the political. There is actually in Mr. Read's position more repudiation than acceptance; his neo-scholasticism is a critical method of disposing of "modernism," but if it represents any synthesis of experience, it is a personal one; and Mr. Read's anarchism is not far from quietism.

There is another powerful influence operating in Mr. Read's mind—that of T. E. Hulme—which appears as an extension of his medieval realism into the field of esthetics. He says, "We must surrender our mind to universal truth; but our imagination is free to dream; is as free as the dream; is the dream." Here we have Hulme's theory of "discontinuities" in experience. Hulme maintained the absolute validity of physical science, but sharply denied its application to the human realm; Mr. Read likewise accepts the "empirical tradition of modern science" and then allows to the imagination its own autonomy, which he calls the "dream." But what is this dream to be about; what is it going to dream? It seems that Dante's dream was pretty well cut out for him; and here we are brought back again to Mr. Read's dilemma: how are we going to get more than the personal insight without the specific tradition and the specific institution?

When Mr. Read attacks idealism he attacks the *willed* truth, or the unrestrained application of scientific knowledge, apart from spiritual values, to the whole realm of human experience. Mr. Read seems to assent to the idea of "progress," yet his central position is an attack on it, insofar as it attacks the modern cult of the practical will. Mr. Louis MacNeice avoids metaphysical subtleties, only to move within the definitely marked-off area of one of them. He is an Hegelian. But of this limitation he seems not to be aware. At the end of "Modern Poetry" he says: "There is no reason why even a fascist should not nowadays write a good love-song or a good nonsense poem or epigram. But it is probably true that, for the production nowadays of major literature or of literature on a large scale, a sympathy is required in the writer with those forces which at the moment make for progress." Mr. MacNeice evidently knows what those forces are. But that is not all: "The important events outside him [the writer] must penetrate him in the same way as Euripides was penetrated by the Peloponnesian War or by the intellectual discoveries of the Sophists." If Mr. MacNeice is committed to the forces of the moment, his progress will thrive only if he can catch up with the forces of the next moment; and, moreover, one may ask, are "important events" forces that make for progress, or are they only news? Was the Peloponnesian War an instance of progress, or only an historical event?

Mr. MacNeice is not always so woolly. If I press this point it is only to get at the background of his critical opinions of poetry. "Poets like Auden, Spender and Day Lewis have adopted a system of belief which they have not quite grown into." MacNeice approves the willing of a "truth" in the conscious adoption of belief—if it doesn't go too far. (The belief seems to be some kind of Marxism or, in Auden's verse, Marx and Freud; but here the particular belief is irrelevant.) One could almost predict from Mr. MacNeice's "progressive" attitude a return to the inherently poetical subject (though he assures us that poetry can be "about" anything) and to Arnold's "criticism of life," a phrase which he revives only to assure us that Arnold meant what MacNeice wants him to mean; and MacNeice wants him to mean this: that poets ought to have a situation in which "they can take sides," with one set of ab-

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stractions or another but without, of course, getting too near the tar-brush of didacticism.

This inherently poetical but undidactic subject MacNeice never quite squares up with another view that I find the most interesting and original in his book: "For the poet's first business is *mentioning* things." That is to say, the poet has got to *denote* before he can play upon the connotations of his language; and the failure of poets from Shelley and Coleridge to Pound and Eliot to denote firmly their objects of reference is the soundest point of MacNeice's attack upon his immediate predecessors—an attack that would otherwise look very much like literary politics. (He tells us, for example, that Eliot's outlook is only that of a university don—which says nothing about Eliot's verse and only a little about MacNeice's revolt against its influence.) But the obligation of the poet to mention things does not seem to me to obligate him to get into the "forces which at the moment make for progress" and which relegate the fascist to nonsense verse and epigram. Another idea of Arnold's could be safely recommended to Mr. MacNeice: his belief that the romantic revival was a little premature, and that the romantics "did not know enough."

MacNeice knows a great deal that—owing to the autobiography into which he casts his survey of modern verse—never becomes as effective as it might otherwise have been. He conscientiously recollects his adolescent views of poetry; and the question remains whether he is interested in the history of his views or in a rationally organized critical theory to which he is willing to commit himself. There is throughout the book an uneasiness lest somebody think that he believes poetry to be something remarkable or complex or special; there is a continual talking it down, most glaringly in the shallow treatment of Yeats. "Modern Poetry" is a confession, and one suspects that after this confession, as after the more familiar kind, the penitent will find a new life somewhere else in a kind of Hegelian progress into the purity of abstractions. It would be a pity if Louis MacNeice, in many respects a better poet than Auden, and easily one of the best poets living, should so succumb to the forces of progress that in the coming crisis, when "poetry may for a time be degraded or even silenced," he should turn out to be one of the people who have "no more time for play or criticism."

In "The Poet's Defense" Dr. Bronowski takes a long view of the English tradition that, more resourcefully presented, ought to be of value to Mr. MacNeice's generation. But the style is a dour and puritanical spareness of vocabulary wholly inadequate for the somewhat subtle implications of the argument. Beginning with Sir Philip Sidney, Dr. Bronowski argues that poetry gives us a kind of knowledge quite as valid as the scientific sort:

> Shelley held vaguely to poetry because he liked it; but his faith was in science because he was in awe of it. Shelley's "Defense of Poetry" is, at last, that the poet is a kind of scientist, and even is a better scientist than scientists. I do not think that poetry can be defended with such fancies. If we believe that only science can tell the truth, it is our business to get on with being scientists. . . . We may find excuses for poetry: as a makeshift propaganda until science has found a better, as a makeshift training of the will until science has found a better.

Dr. Bronowski makes two genuine contributions to criticism; first, he finds in Coleridge chiefly a restatement of the Augustan canons of taste based upon a new psychological principle of pleasure; and secondly he shows that this pleasure-principle tended from the romantic era to the present to restrict poetry to sensation, while "knowledge" was meanwhile the special province of science; he thus explicitly sketches in the background of Mr. I. A. Richards' views, which he also finds implicit in poets as different as Swinburne and Yeats, whom he calls "anti-poets" along with Shelley, the "mock idealist." What Dr. Bronowski is saying is that unless epistemology can ask real questions, then poetry becomes as unreal as philosophy; there remain only sensation for poetry and the empirical method for science. The author seems to lack the philosophical training to deal with this problem, and his book is only suggestive.

ALLEN TATE

The WPA Guide to New York

New York City Guide, prepared by the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration in New York City. New York: Random House. 728 pages, with 170 illustrations and 39 maps. $3.

THERE IS an easy way of reviewing the regional guide books put out by the Federal Writers' Project, and the present example (itself a companion volume to the "New York Panorama," published earlier) is no exception. You begin, in a sort of open-mouthed, things-I-never-knew-till-now fashion, by listing a wild miscellany of intricately ill assorted facts you've discovered in the volume: that there are 1,900,000 dried specimens of herbs in the herbarium at the New York Botanical Garden; that the now buried Minetta Brook comes briefly to the surface in the court of the Holley Chambers, a hotel on Washington Square West; that the Empire State Building has 2,158,000 square feet of rentable floor space; that in 1937, 24,550 children were born on Manhattan, an island whose highest point (located near Fort Tryon Park) is 268 feet above sea level, and whose total land value in 1938 was assessed at $3,962,738,145. It seems to me that this type of treatment barely scratches the surface of the Guide's real purpose.

For one thing, it gives too much the impression that the Guide is a mere compendium of attention-catching but more or less useless statistical provender, a factual grab-bag full of the urban equivalent of the oddity-items you find in small type in a farmer's almanac. It gives no hint of the synthesis, the integration of fact with interpretation that have gone into the book. I think a fairer way of suggesting its value would be to quote directly. I'd like to add, on honor, that the ensuing quote was taken absolutely at random. I opened the book at page 176, and the paragraph my eye first fell on ran as follows:

> In the quiet block of Forty-third Street west of Times Square the stage doors of the Lyric and other formerly legitimate theatres have a ghostly air. On the north side of the street is the New York Times Annex, a white terra-cotta office building where all the publishing activities are carried on. Under the management of Adolph S. Ochs, the dignified and encyclopedic Times grew from a daily circulation of 19,000 to 490,000 and took its position as the foremost American newspaper. Distinguished for its foreign-news coverage and its superior readability, The Times today is as sedate and exhaustive as it was in the

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earlier years when Ochs described it as "the sort of paper which no one needs to be ashamed to be seen reading." Guides are provided on application to groups who wish to tour the building.

ASCENSION MEMORIAL CHAPEL, a plain, steeple-less building of dark-red brick, lies in the shadow of modern office buildings on the north side of Forty-third near Eighth Avenue. . . .

I admit that I picked a hard one, but the essence of the thing was to choose at random, and I'll stick to that. Even here, it seems to me, what meat there is to be gotten out of that single block-length has been extracted, about as skillfully and succinctly as it could possibly be done. "Quiet" and "ghostly" perfectly describe that air of being a back-alley to the busier Forty-second Street that the block has. The two points of interest are recognizably described. The Times, as a paper, is justly characterized, with that quotation from Ochs neatly ticketing its main pretensions. When you think that there are 19,774 other block-lengths in the city (that last fact is my own, arrived at by divination, and the WPA will have to check it) and the same concise, comprehensive method is applied to each one of them where anything of conceivable interest to the visitor may be found, you begin to realize how superb an achievement the book is.

It's a method that can range from such minutely particularizing items as the weight of the Statue of Liberty (225 tons) and the number of strands in each cable of the George Washington Bridge (26,474) to such really sparkling interpretative passages as the one (pages 471-5) on a typical Sunday at Coney Island. The arrangement of material is equally admirable. All five boroughs are included, and these are again subdivided into what amount to "neighborhoods." (For example, in Manhattan, Chelsea, Yorkville and the Negro as distinguished from the Spanish and Italian Harlems all come in for separate consideration.) Each area has its map, and a brief introductory passage describing its special characteristics, before the detailed treatment begins. The illustrations, mainly photographs with a few reproductions of city-genre drawings, lithographs, etc., by contemporary artists, are generally well chosen. Sites of more than usual interest (the Aquarium, Rockefeller Center) are individually described, and there are compendious listings of restaurants (with their specialties), hotels (with prices), transportation lines and so on. It's hard to think of anything left out.

It's hard, too, to think how such a book as this, with its massing of detail, its organized accumulation of relevant information, could have been prepared in any way other than it was, with the staff and the resources that government sponsorship made possible. In this respect, the Federal Writers' Project has set a new standard for documentary writing, a standard that will, I'm afraid, make the efforts of individual authors on comparable subjects seem in future as out of date technically as the old-fashioned water wheel when compared with the TVA. All this is written, as anything that treats of the WPA must be nowadays, under the shadow of the Woodrum law, which, unless its provisions for state aid are taken advantage of more effectively than now seems likely, will deal a deadly blow to the Writers' Project as a whole, and specifically to some two dozen other regional works. That would mean the end of the most successful experiments in coöperative writing ever undertaken.

ROBERT M. COATES

Hearts of Oak

The British Common People: 1746-1938, by G. D. H. Cole and Raymond Postgate. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 633 pages. $4.

HISTORIES of the trade-union movement which are that and nothing more are seldom completely satisfactory. The workers' attempts to organize cannot really be understood unless they are placed in their economic and political setting. To grasp fully the reasons which led men to brave imprisonment, transportation and hanging for the mere right to join together into workingmen's associations, one must get a clear picture of the social and economic environment—among other things, of the rise and fall of wages, working conditions, standards of living, industrial organization, political parties, humanitarian and radical movements, class structure, the temper and power of the ruling class. In their history of the British common people for the two centuries from 1746 to 1938 Cole and Postgate have attempted to paint all these things and more on a broad canvas. They have succeeded admirably.

The period chosen is perhaps the most important in British history. Changes of far-reaching importance socially, politically and economically, made the Great Britain of 1938 a vastly different place from the Britain of 1746. In the middle of the eighteenth century the eight million inhabitants of the island were fairly independent—had they been cut off from the rest of the world, they would have suffered some hardship, but they would undoubtedly have survived; in the twentieth century, the forty-six million inhabitants were completely dependent on the rest of the world—had they been cut off from it, they would have starved. Where formerly they lived in rural areas with only two towns, London and Bristol, having more than 50,000 inhabitants, by 1938 more than four-fifths of the population was concentrated in cities. The Industrial Revolution begun in the eighteenth century had attained its full flowering by the twentieth; the accompanying change from rule by land lords to rule by money lords was completed before the end of the later period.

In the past, most British historians, like those of other nations, have written the history of their country in terms of the social and political activities of these ruling classes or their puppets in the government. The material for a different type of history to be written in terms of the lives of the common people, where and how they lived, the kind of work they did, their struggles and aspirations, has always existed. It has been used, too, but most often by professed propagandists for overt propaganda purposes. It is cause for rejoicing that a growing number of able historians like Cole and Postgate, possessed of all the critical apparatus of sound scholarship, are turning their attention to writing histories of the new type. Their method will of course be derided by those academicians for whom objectivity in history is never attained when the result of research proves favorable to the working-class cause, but it will command the respect of fair-minded scholars. They have gone to sources; they are careful; where not enough evidence is at hand to prove a point, they say so and advance only tentative conclusions.

Nevertheless, they do call a spade a spade. And they do pile up convincing evidence of the terrible struggle the

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working class has gone through to obtain its present position of comparative strength. As early as 1807, industrial spies were used by the government as *agents provocateurs*. In fact, the evidence is plain that many of the working-class revolts were instigated, in great measure, by these vermin. The ruling class could be cruel as well as crafty. In 1830 there occurred an uprising of the miserably poor farm laborers in the southern and eastern counties. Though not a single person was killed or wounded by the revolters, the Special Commission of judges who tried the offenders sentenced nine to hanging, 457 to transportation, and almost an equal number to prison. "Henry Cook, a lad of nineteen, who had committed the enormity of knocking off the hat of a member of the Baring family during an altercation, was among those who were hanged." In the light of the repressive measures used by the ruling class throughout the two-century history, the familiar outcry against the trade unions' abuse of their responsibilities is nauseating. Nothing the working class can do can ever in any way begin to equal the horrible abuses of the capitalist class during its long reign.

With true objectivity the authors of this history of the common people call murder by its right name even when it is a weapon of the government. It is refreshing to find in these new histories that the word "terror" is becoming associated with the ruling class, which has never hesitated to employ it, instead of with the revolutionary proletariat alone. Those historians who may be worried at the change in emphasis of the new history should take a tip from Thomas Paine's analysis of Edmund Burke's concern for the sufferings of Marie Antoinette. Paine wrote in "The Rights of Man" that Burke "pitied the plumage and forgot the dying bird."

LEO HUBERMAN

Negro History

Black Folk—Then and Now, by W. E. B. DuBois. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 413 pages. $3.50.

IT IS ALMOST a quarter of a century since Dr. DuBois wrote his book on the Negro for the Home University Library series. This little volume has grown in usefulness and has become a standard reference. It has now been rewritten in the light of developments that have taken place in the meantime, and some of the additional material that has been made available, and makes its appearance in a new and greatly enlarged form.

Beginning his discussion with a consideration of the formation of the Negro race and its prehistory, Dr. DuBois next briefly describes the cultures of the various portions of the African continent. The study then moves from anthropology to history, and discusses the incidence of both the African and the New World slave trade, the characteristics of African and New World slavery, and the manner in which freedom was won by and for the slaves. Finally it takes up the political and economic aspects of its subject, analyzing the present-day status of Negroes in the United States and what is called "black Europe"—Africa—in terms of how Negroes are ruled and, as concerns Africa especially, what happened to their lands in the face of white colonization.

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One cannot but wonder why, in a book that represents the result of so many years of investigation, thought and activity, greater advantage was not taken of the most recent work in certain of the fields it touches on, and why a more critical point of view was not brought to bear on its materials. Negro chauvinism is no less defensible than any other brand; and it is as inadvisable to insist that Egypt, for instance, had a "Negro" culture as it is to rule out the participation of Negroid folk in the making of that civilization. Dr. DuBois' sources for African materials are often quite out of date and superseded by more competent works; thus it is hard to understand why, in discussing the significance of the ruins of Zimbabwe in southeast Africa (not spelled "Zymbabwe" for many a long year), he could have overlooked the definitive work of Miss Caton-Thompson, which incidentally tends to support his thesis. He reflects neither the actualities of African social life nor the position of most modern Africanists when he indicates the choice of commodities in African markets as ranging from "earthenware to wives."

Taken by themselves, these may be minor points, but the aggregate they represent does much to lessen the usefulness of the entire first half of the book. Dr. DuBois is incomparably better when he discusses present-day problems of Negro life the world over, and his pen is tellingly employed in expounding the wrongs these people have suffered. Even here, however, one meets with constant overstatement, while the tendency found in an earlier book of his to read into slave revolts something analogous to a self-conscious modern labor movement, which these were not, is also present in this volume. Yet despite this it is extremely valuable and in the interests of clarity of thought to have it stressed that the slaves did not accept their lot, and that they did constantly and by force attempt to change their status.

The most important contribution of the book is the breadth of treatment of its subject. Ordinarily, there is a tendency for those who write of the Negro to restrict themselves to the country which they are considering, but in this work Africa, the West Indies and the United States all figure, and the early indigenous cultures of Negro folk no less than the later developments of the life of Africans in the New World and Africa itself. Time depth and geographical breadth—both are essential if the Negro problem is to be understood for what it actually is and for what it is graphically depicted in this book; a world problem, with which all peoples, whatever their racial affiliations, must be concerned if they are to assure their own best future development.

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS

New Books: A Reader's List

I WENT TO THE SOVIET ARCTIC, by Ruth Gruber (Simon and Schuster, $3). The articles which Dr. Gruber wrote for The New York Herald Tribune about her visit to Igarka, the new city which the Soviets have built in the Arctic, and the famous trip of the "Anadyr," which opened the Arctic sea route from Vladivostok to Murmansk—expanded into a book. Swell journalism, full of detail that makes the unbelievable communities five hundred miles from the North Pole matter-of-fact and understandable.

BLACK NARCISSUS, by Rumer Godden (Little, Brown, $2.50). A group of English Sisters try to establish a convent in a crazy palace facing the Himalayas. The story is about their work, failure, increased wisdom and the characters of the region. The book is a little unusual, the style delicate, characters fairly robust. Good reading.

O. HENRY ENCORE, by Mary Sunlocks Harrell (Doubleday, Doran $2). Stories, sketches and drawings, discovered in the back files of The Houston Post, and pretty well established as early O. Henry. Intended even at the time for no more than the day's reading, but valuable to students and an unusually good job of literary sleuthing.

I KNOCK AT THE DOOR, by Sean O'Casey (Macmillan, $2.50). Recollections of the first twelve years of an Irish Protestant boyhood. There was trouble, and some idea of what was to come later, but it is done with a light touch, some poetry, a good picture-making quality, and honesty. Light, but not negligible.

FROST AND FIRE, by Elliott Merrick (Scribner's, $2.50). The frostbitten perils of life in Labrador would give any novel a head start in interest; and this isn't just any novel. The characters here are up against hostile weather, hunger, unfair trading companies and the unexpected. Fresh with the sweep and clear chill of the northern outdoors.

Contributors

CHARLES E. HEWITT JR. recently returned from five years in Germany as a correspondent for Reuters, the British news service, and The Chicago Daily News. He is associate publisher of The Daily News, of the Tonawandas, New York.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES has recently returned to the United States after traveling in Mexico and Europe on a Guggenheim fellowship. He is teaching this summer on the staff of the Writers' Conference at the University of New Hampshire.

RALPH BATES is a British novelist whose books include "Lean Men," "The Olive Field" and "Sirocco." He recently spent six months in Mexico.

MARY HEATON VORSE, journalist, short-story writer and novelist, has all her life been a participant in and a commentator on the labor movement. She is now traveling in Europe.

JOE HORRELL is an instructor in English at the University of North Carolina.

ALLEN TATE has published several books of poetry and criticism, including "Selected Poems" (1937) and "Reactionary Essays." His novel, "The Fathers," was published last fall by Putnam's. In September he will go to Princeton as the Resident Fellow in Poetry.

ROBERT M. COATES, author of "Yesterday's Burdens" and "The Outlaw Years," is the art critic of The New Yorker.

LEO HUBERMAN, author of "We, The People," "Man's Worldly Goods" and "The Labor Spy Racket," is in the Social Science Department at New College, Columbia University.

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS is professor of Anthropology at Northwestern University. He has done extensive field work in Dutch Guiana, West Africa and Haiti.

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